


3 1761 11630720 8





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2023 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761116307208>

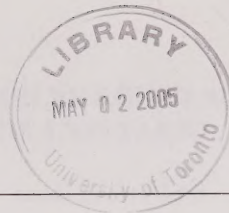












No. 134A

N° 134A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 25 April 2005**

**Lundi 25 avril 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 April 2005

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 avril 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

#### **Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):**

Imagine my shock this past Friday when I received a copy of a Liberal Party press release stating that our leader, John Tory, was calling for a funding cut to Ontario municipalities and that I was calling for a cut to municipalities in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The press release was targeted at PC-held ridings and quoted the member for Perth–Middlesex in an attempt to deflect some of the heat that he is taking in his own riding for the beatings some of his own communities are taking under this Liberal government plan that actually reduces grants to municipalities by \$47 million.

I reiterate the challenge issued by our leader, John Tory, that the member for Perth–Middlesex produce one quote that supports his claim or issue a retraction immediately. We know that municipal governments across the province are extremely upset with the impact these Liberal cuts are going to have on their ability to provide service to their ratepayers. We also know that politics can sometimes be rough. But spreading this kind of misinformation is a new low even for the McGuinty Liberals. Our party is committed to fighting for a fair deal for municipalities. We have continually urged the government to honour its promise to communities.

As for the member for Perth–Middlesex, I would urge him to return to those principles of truth and honesty. At the end of the day, they are far more important than a taxpayer-funded car and driver as a reward for blind obedience.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I would just caution members about unparliamentary wording as they express themselves in statements.

### HOT DOCS FILM FESTIVAL

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** I have two statements to make today. My mother turned 94

today. If I'm as healthy as my mother, hopefully, I will reach that fine, ripe old age.

My second statement: I rise today to recognize the Hot Docs international documentary film festival, which is celebrating its 12th year showcasing the best in documentary film from Canada and around the world. Hot Docs has built a strong international audience over the years with a solid reputation for excellence in documentary programming. In 2004, attendance grew to more than 37,000 people. It is currently being hailed as one of the world's A-list documentary festivals. Public interest in documentaries has exploded in the past few years. The quality of work at Hot Docs showcases the full range of cultural landscape in Canada and internationally.

I ask you to join me in commending the work of the Hot Docs festival organizers and their commitment to showcasing excellence in documentary production, reflecting the true voices of people whose everyday lives are reflected in the stories. The Hot Docs international documentary film festival runs from April 22 until May 1, 2005. For more information, call 416-203-2155.

### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** Last Friday at the Bill 164 hearings in Oshawa, my colleagues and I had the opportunity to listen to Heather Crowe tell her story. A non-smoker who worked for decades in a smoky Ottawa restaurant area, Heather Crowe now suffers from lung cancer. Her time is now spent educating other Canadians about the dangers of second-hand smoke.

Meanwhile, the opposition and their friends in the tobacco lobby continue to try to refute the evidence that second-hand smoke kills and to argue for designated smoking rooms and things that only go halfway in protecting Ontarians from the kinds of complications that Heather Crowe suffers. They're still looking for the line on the autopsy that says, "Cause of death: second-hand smoke."

I was part of the city of Ottawa council that brought in a no-smoking bylaw that did not permit designated smoking rooms. We made the right decision in going all the way with that legislation; I continue to be thanked for it. It was an easy choice for me. My son, a non-smoker, used to work evenings as a doorman at a downtown Ottawa club. Over time, he developed a chronic cough and ended up at the doctor's office. The doctor initially thought he was a heavy smoker and told him that he really should quit. My son quit his job, and the cough disappeared.



When people like Heather Crowe testify to the harms of second-hand smoke, when they offer up their bodies as evidence of its horrible side effects, we should all sit up straight and listen carefully. Heather Crowe, thank you for helping Ontarians to protect each other from second-hand smoke.

### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Canada's justice system continues to fail Canadians. Mind-boggling decisions by judges that seem to completely lack common sense and blithely ignore victims occur all too frequently, feeding the disillusionment of Canadians. A case in point was a sentence handed down in Ottawa court by Judge Roydon Kealey for one Henry Danninger. Danninger, initially charged with second-degree murder, was ultimately convicted of manslaughter in the stabbing death of Andrew Moffitt, a 23-year-old University of Ottawa student. Andrew had attempted to act as a peace-maker during a bar fight and was fatally stabbed.

Prior to his trial, Danninger was released on bail under conditions that restricted his movements and obligated him to keep the peace and be of good behaviour. During that time, Danninger ran a terror campaign against one of his neighbours, dumping feces and urine on the neighbour's car and driveway on an almost nightly basis. The neighbour ultimately installed a video camera, and Danninger was caught on tape on 24 separate occasions. When the tapes were turned over to police, Danninger's bail was pulled and he was locked up.

At sentencing, Justice Kealey unbelievably awarded Danninger two-for-one credit for his time on bail, time that included his almost nightly prowls to pour urine and feces over his neighbour's car. I ask the Attorney General to request that the prosecuting crown submit his views for consideration in Mr. Danninger's upcoming parole board hearing. Hopefully such a submission will assist Andy's family and friends to right the wrong imposed by Justice Kealey's sentencing decision and keep Mr. Danninger in jail.

### EARTH WEEK

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I'm proud to speak to the House today on the good work that the community of Thornhill is putting forth in regard to Earth Week, and how we are putting the three principles, "reduce, reuse and recycle," to good use.

I had the pleasure of speaking to the students of Brownridge Public School on April 15 to kick off their environmental cleanup day. I spoke about the importance of keeping our community clean and the importance of the three Rs. Afterwards, we gathered outside to clean up the school park. In the past, the students have planted on the school property as well as participating in the school's environmental club for grades 1, 2 and 5 students. I would like to thank Ms. Strachan and Ms.

Lostritto of Brownridge Public School for organizing the Earth Month events.

### 1340

Charlton Public School in my riding has a routine litter cleanup campaign by taking the initiative of assigning a month to each grade to clean up the school area. They also have a Charlton environmental leadership team made up of grades 4, 5 and 6 students. The school plants flowers on the school property, composts waste, and puts out a bi-yearly environmental news publication. I would like to congratulate Mr. James Craig of Charlton Public School for heading up the environmental team.

Last Friday, I took part in the 20-minute Vaughan makeover at Dufferin Clark Community Centre, as well as in the Concord West Ratepayer Association park cleanup at Southview Park. I will also take part in the Pomona Park cleanup in the town of Markham on Saturday, April 30, at 9:30 am.

I encourage the residents in my riding and those in the province to participate in their local Earth Week events so that we can ensure that the message to keep our community clean is heard and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you.

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** It is with a great deal of sadness that I rise in the House to read a clipping that I took out of the Toronto Sun this morning. It says, "Dalton Backs Off." Let me read:

"Premier Dalton McGuinty has blinked in his fight with the federal government" over the huge discrepancy in the amount of money that Ontario taxpayers put in versus what they take out.

"Apparently heeding the call of his federal Liberal cousins to cool the rhetoric, McGuinty said Friday he was temporarily putting aside his funding fight and pledging support" for the minority Martin government.

"....As Conservative MPP Tim Hudak pointed out, 'Paul Martin's in trouble.... It's the right time to put the knockout punch out there.'"

I want to encourage the McGuinty government to stay on track. Keep up the fight for Ontario's hospitals, for Ontario's nurses, for Ontario's immigrants. When you fight for the good people of Ontario against this corrupt government, you'll have the support of hard-working men and women, hard-working Conservatives, and even a few New Democrats, I might add.

So if you could call on your federal cousins to keep up the fight, to ensure that Ontario gets its fair share. If Paul Martin and the goons in his office would spend as much time listening and talking to the Ontario government and Ontario political parties, if they would spend half the amount of time they did—instead of maligning Warren Kinsella and smearing Warren Kinsella, as they did at the public accounts committee, they should be talking with the Ontario government on how to adequately fund health care in this province.



*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. Just keep the language a bit parliamentary for me, please.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):**

Two quick announcements this morning, the first also to acknowledge a media clip and to hope that the member for Nepean-Carleton reaches his goal of early retirement in the not-too-distant future.

I rise today more formally to speak about the economic record of the McGuinty government. We came to office with a commitment to make Ontario the best place in North America to build a business and raise a family, and we're delivering on that commitment.

You just have to look at the numbers. Between March 2004 and March 2005, we've created 79,700 new jobs in the province of Ontario. Of those, some 6,300 are in the northern part of the province, and northern unemployment has fallen from 7.7% in November 2003 to 6.8% in March 2005.

These are all indicators that the McGuinty government's economic strategy is working. Instead of the race-to-the-bottom economy that the Tory party was famous for, we're committed to building an economy that's innovative and focused on the knowledge-based economy, one that's global in its outlook and can compete with the best in the world.

Take, for example, the auto sector. In their entire term, the Tory government did nothing to attract new investment. In our time in office, through our auto investment strategy under the leadership of Minister Cordiano, we've helped bring GM's Beacon project to fruition. We've also helped Ford bring a billion-dollar investment in state-of-the-art manufacturing to Oakville.

I'm proud to be part of a government that is moving forward on our economy.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** I rise today to speak about the support that this government is getting in our fight to get a fair share for Ontario. Last week, a group of health providers called on the Prime Minister to meet with the Premier to address the issue of closing the \$23-billion gap so that Ontario can invest in "urgent priorities, including health care transformation."

Hilary Short, president and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association, Doris Grinspun, executive director of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, and Dr. John Rapin, president of the Ontario Medical Association, are among the eight people who signed the letter.

To be able to continue being the economic engine of the country, Ontario needs to be in a position where we can invest in the services that make our province what it is. We need to close the \$23-billion gap so that we can make needed investments to transform health care, reduce class sizes and give our kids the best possible start in life, and to invest in post-secondary education so that we can be a world leader in the knowledge economy. As

the Premier has said, and as was reiterated in this letter, "Investing in Ontario is investing in Canada."

I would like to close with a reference to the Leader of the Opposition, who mentioned to me that there seems to be some discrepancy about the Ontario municipal partnership fund. The London Free Press, a Sun paper, not really one that is kind to my government, has backed up my allegation that we know how to do grade 8 math over here on this side of the House but that the Leader of the Opposition is wrong. I might add that he mentioned, when talking about my riding of Perth-Middlesex, the great community of Southgate. I'd like to remind the Leader of the Opposition that Southgate, sir, is in your riding, not mine.

## DOCTORS' SERVICES

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** I rise to welcome to Queen's Park medical students from around the province. They represent the future of medicine in our province. They're here today to shed light on the challenges of accessibility to medical training in Ontario. This is a dilemma that our government has recognized and is dealing with quickly and diligently.

Here are some of the steps we've taken in our first year and a half in office:

We're increasing overall residency spots by 22% by 2006-07.

We're addressing the family doctor shortage in Ontario by increasing residency spots for family medicine by 70%, or 141 spots, by 2006. This means 337 more family doctors ready to practise in 2008.

We're finally going to capitalize on our greatest strength: our people. We have more than doubled the number of training spots for international medical graduates, from 90 to 200.

We've established the Northern Medical School, creating 56 new medical school spots.

Also, our agreement with the OMA makes us competitive with other provinces. It includes a clerkship stipend of \$500 per month to undergraduate medical students in their final 12 months of medical school.

Premier McGuinty and Minister Smitherman are truly transforming health care in Ontario, and medical students will continue to be part of this positive change.

Let us not forget that the lack of medical spots in our schools began when the NDP cut medical school spots by 13%. The Tories compounded the problem. As a result of the actions of the NDP and the inaction of the Tories, Ontario lost 500 potential doctors.

We're cleaning up the mess. This government, with the help of the medical students, is working to meet the challenge of accessibility to medical training in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Motions? The government House leader.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** No.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I was going to move adjournment



of the House, but if you don't want to do that, we'll just work till midnight.

## MOTIONS

### APPOINTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to deal with government notice of motion number 354 without debate or amendment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent, as requested by the House leader? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Gord Miller as the Environmental Commissioner for the province of Ontario as provided in section 49 of the Environmental Bill of Rights, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act,

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those against the motion, please say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Baird, John R.  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David

Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Klees, Frank  
Kular, Kuldeep

Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Smith, Monique  
Sterling, Norman W.

Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Colle, Mike  
Craitor, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Kwinter, Monte  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Matthews, Deborah  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
O'Toole, John  
Peters, Steve

Takhar, Harinder S.  
Tory, John  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Wilkinson, John  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakubuski, John  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

### Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
Horwath, Andrea

Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario

Martiniuk, Gerry  
Prue, Michael

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 59; the nays are 6.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## VISITORS

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In response to the statement by the member for London North Centre, I'm pleased to introduce Ontario medical school students who are with us in the gallery.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** That is not a point of order.

1400

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** Earlier today I had the pleasure to be in North Bay to reaffirm our government's commitment to Ontario's small urban and rural communities. Together with my colleagues from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, we announced an investment of more than \$249 million by the province and Ottawa for projects that will renew local infrastructure in 120 Ontario cities, towns, villages and rural areas.

This investment represents the first intake of the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, or COMRIF, which, together with municipal investments, is expected to stimulate up to \$900 million in capital investments over the next five years.

Ontario was the first province in Canada to sign a joint agreement with the federal government for this program, and we have moved quickly to bring the benefits to communities across Ontario. It is a terrific initiative, based on the understanding that good, modern infrastructure is key to ensuring strong and healthy communities. It shows our government's commitment to providing Ontario's small



urban and rural communities the opportunities they need to grow and be prosperous. Their success is critical to the success of our province.

Our government has delivered a number of important initiatives as part of Ontario's overarching rural plan. The rural plan builds on rural Ontario's strengths: dedicated citizens, diverse economic opportunities, unrivalled natural resources and an unwavering sense of community.

We had these principles of the rural plan in mind when we came to the table to design COMRIF—we wanted to ensure it supported the priorities of rural Ontarians. We're proud that, through COMRIF, we'll be improving the public infrastructure of 120 small urban and rural communities.

I'm particularly proud that COMRIF is the first infrastructure program developed jointly by the province, the federal government and the municipalities through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and that the priorities that municipal leaders told us they wanted addressed—clean, safe drinking water, better sewage systems, improved waste management processes, and safer roads and bridges—are being addressed by our investment in Ontario's communities.

I believe COMRIF sets a new benchmark for co-operation among all three orders of government, and the success of the program is abundantly clear. We want improvements to critical infrastructure to get started fast, so that Ontarians can quickly gain the benefits. We wanted to be sure decisions were finalized and announcements were made in time for municipalities to get tenders out and start work during this year's construction season.

There will be more investments to come for intake 2 and intake 3 of COMRIF. Municipalities will have further opportunities to identify their infrastructure needs and submit proposals for potential projects, the details of which will be announced in the near future.

In addition to COMRIF, our government offers other innovative programs to assist in the renewal of Ontario's infrastructure. The Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority—or OSIFA, as it's known—helps municipal governments borrow funds for infrastructure at better terms and lower interest rates.

By working together, we are building stronger communities and helping to deliver a quality of life that is indeed second to none.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Responses?**

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to respond, on behalf of the official opposition, to the minister's statement in the House today. Certainly those municipalities that have received some long-awaited funding for their capital projects will be happy with the news today. I know that others which did not receive funding will be looking forward to an opportunity to work with the ministry and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal to ensure that their projects hopefully get funded in the second and third rounds.

I'm very proud, as are members of our caucus who were part of a government that made the biggest investment in infrastructure in Ontario through the SuperBuild program. Certainly my colleague from Oxford can tell

you a lot about the record investments in rural infrastructure made under the OSTAR program and the OSTAR RED program. I was pleased to help play a lead on the investment in community recreation, tourism and cultural infrastructure as well. Many of these projects are now coming to fruition, even here in the city of Toronto, like the ROM project, the AGO and others. It's a revolution in cultural tourism. So we're pleased to see the government continuing, to some extent, the programs and the massive investments in infrastructure under Premiers Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

We do have to realize, though, that while today's announcement will be welcomed by a number of municipalities on the list, most will greet this as a salve on the wounds by the new funding formula from Dalton McGuinty that has slashed funding to Ontario's municipalities. In fact, when you compare the previous CRF program with the ongoing funding under the Dalton McGuinty program, it's some \$47 million in reductions of annual funding to municipalities. While this will be welcomed, we would like to see more action in fixing the funding formula that is impairing a great number of municipalities, which is, I will add, yet another broken promise by Dalton McGuinty, who has shattered the Guinness World Records when it comes to breaking promises. He said he had a better funding formula for municipalities, and certainly those across the province, like my friend from Chatham-Kent—you've got to pull the municipal politicians off the ceiling, they're so incensed with Dalton McGuinty's betrayal of many of our municipalities.

Let's look at a couple of examples:

**Haliburton:** I know my colleague from Haliburton—Victoria-Brock has fought hard for the culvert replacements in Haliburton. That municipality will receive \$330,000 through COMRIF, which is welcome, but the county is losing some \$3.5 million in funding under the new funding formula. So while the \$330,000 is welcome, they're going to be hard pressed to pay their municipal share, looking at a cut of some \$3.5 million.

**Kincardine:** No doubt my colleague from Grey-Owen Sound will be happy with the funding of the Stewart bridge project, some \$200,000. But Kincardine now has to wrestle with a \$1.2-million reduction, and I know the minister has looked to the press coming out of Kincardine and the Grey-Owen Sound area, and they are furious with the betrayal by Dalton McGuinty when it comes to municipal funding.

I know my colleague from Lanark will be happy that the Little Clyde River bridge is getting some funding under this program. But there's approximately \$2.4 million less for Lanark county under this program.

In the united counties of Leeds and Grenville it's some \$3.3 million, the difference in what they had received under CRF in 2004 and what they will receive on an annual go-forward basis under the new program. So the funding for the Spencerville bridge replacement is welcomed, but is a devastating cut.

In my riding of West Lincoln, I'm pleased and thank the minister that the project has come forward to help pay

for a series of road, bridge and culvert repairs, but the \$600,000 that is coming from the province does not make up for the annual reduction of over \$700,000 taken out of the community of West Lincoln.

I do want to add that, while this is the first round of projects—I know both ministers are listening closely. Certainly, while some projects in Niagara have come forward that we're happy about, Wainfleet and a really strong pending environmental concern to the water and sewer system—I want to reinforce the need for that project. I hope that in the second round we'll see the Wainfleet project get near the top of the list.

My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has a similar concern in Arnprior, a significant environmental project dealing with the sewage system that is very important. I hope they'll get further consideration, among others.

The last thing I'll say is that I would expect that the greenbelt municipalities will have some further assistance. Their growth has been frozen in by the minister's greenbelt plan, and I do hope that when he looked at funding these projects, he made sure the greenbelt municipalities were taken into consideration.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I stand today to tell this government that you have perfected an art, and the art is of making and remaking announcements that are not likely to ever happen. You know, in the end nothing actually ever gets done. It doesn't. The classic example of this government is the announcement after announcement of all the housing and houses they are going to build in this province. You know, I once went out to Scarborough, because you said the shovel was going in the ground, to watch the shovel go into the ground, to look at the housing that was going to be built for those who really needed it. While I was watching the shovel go in, it became very clear that you were building condominiums—not housing for people who needed it but condominiums. It was quite deceptive. When the reality comes down after announcement after announcement and you see the actual figures for 2003-04, you see that this government, in the first year of its mandate, contributed to the building of 18 homes, 18 housings for people, and of that, the federal government paid for all 18. You paid for 11. That's the reality.

1410

Now we've got this COMRIF announcement, and I'd just like to quote from your own stuff, quoting the Minister of State, Mr. Godfrey: "The government of Canada's funding for this initiative was provided for in the February 2005 federal budget and complements other initiatives such as the five-year gas tax transfer of \$1.865 billion to Ontario municipalities."

The reality is that the budget has not passed and, as Canadians who watch television know, the budget is likely never to pass. This is a dying government in its dying days. You rushed out there in those dying days to be the very first provincial government to sign on board to match funds they don't have, and you know full well they're never likely to get them. You've got all those municipalities that desperately need the money, that are

looking for the money, that are trying to do something to get the money, and you're out there promising them that they're going to get it.

The reality is, we know what's happening in Ottawa, we know what is likely to happen in the next couple of weeks and we know this government is never going to be required to pony up the \$300 million that is their share. Even if by some miracle this government survives and actually gets the budget passed—and I say it's going to be a miracle, watching what we're seeing on TV these days—I'm not convinced they're going to have the money to do it, because if you watch Mr. Martin this week, they are going from city to city, from province to province, and he is not only talking about saving his government, but he is also talking about spending additional monies in all kinds of places that he's never promised before: monies that aren't included in the budget, monies he doesn't have, monies that he is never going to be able to get through Parliament.

There's no question that Ontario municipalities require the programs that are listed here. I would doubt very much that a single one of them can go without improving their water quality, without looking after waste water or bridges or roads or all the other things that are contained in this list. They need the money, and they're even willing to go out on a limb and borrow the money from you because that's part of the program too. Municipalities that once were able to debenture on their own no longer can afford to do so. Municipalities that used to have money saved up no longer have money saved up. Municipalities have been downloaded. If you want to do something to help municipalities, you should help them with the download. You should help them to be able to afford to build their own infrastructure.

Frankly, I've seen these announcements before; we've all seen these announcements before. The likelihood of your actually having to spend the money, and the likelihood of the municipalities actually getting that money in this fiscal year, looks remote at this point. I don't think you should be congratulating yourself for what you're doing. If this was such a good announcement, you should have waited to see whether the federal budget actually passed before you went out and made promises that you know you're never going to be able to keep.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** May I draw your attention, in the west gallery, to Mr. Gary Malkowski, former member for York East in the 35th Parliament. Welcome.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** In the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Finance—we



tried them last week—my question today will be for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Last Friday, Sudbury city council passed a resolution stating that the city will petition you to provide transitional funding to cover the funding shortfalls for the years 2005-08 under your new so-called fairer program for cities and towns.

According to numbers taken from the Ministry of Finance's own Web site, Sudbury will lose over \$1.7 million annually starting this year. The Minister of Finance said these numbers were wrong when I raised them last week. Is the city of Greater Sudbury wrong, or is the Minister of Finance wrong? Can you straighten this out for us?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I'd like to refer the question to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I just want to perhaps refresh the memory of the Leader of the Opposition. This plan was necessary because of the mistakes of the previous government in downloading responsibility on the municipalities. What the Minister of Finance has done is design a program that is fair and equitable. I say to the public today that no municipality in the province of Ontario in 2005 will get less money than they did the previous year. It is a fair and equitable formula designed to ensure that municipalities across the province are treated fairly by the province of Ontario in the delivery of services they are required to deliver to the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Tory:** It's so discouraging to come in—it's Monday; it's the beginning of a new week—hoping things will get better when it comes to the non-answers. In any event, we'll just keep trying.

We find out that in order to be able to say what you just did, some of the money included in this year's funding is of course for next year. I'll quote from last Wednesday's *Pembroke Daily Observer*. They said, "[County of Renfrew Treasurer Jim Kutschke] noted, however, that one-time funding of \$1.7 million received in 2005 is actually a cash advance for 2006, which means next year's provincial funding will be reduced by that amount."

Minister, why is this McGuinty Liberal program handing Renfrew county taxpayers a \$1.7-million property tax increase? Why are you doing that?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I just say to the public once again that sometimes statements in the House by the member across aren't exactly backed up by the facts. I looked at some statements made last week, where the Conservative Party said that municipalities will lose \$47 million. The fact of the matter is, it was wrong; they get \$38 million more. The Conservative Party said that over 200 municipalities will receive less funding; the fact is, every single municipality will get at least as much money, and 251 will get substantially more.

Here is what a Sudbury ward 5 councillor said: "It's a reliable and predictable source of new revenue, and it's something we're very fortunate to get."

So I would just say that, once again, the facts as presented by the member opposite may not be exactly the real facts. I refer to several statements made by the Conservatives last week that frankly were incorrect. I repeat: Every single municipality is getting at least as much money this year as they did last year, and the formula is fair.

**Mr. Tory:** I want to thank the minister for that half-hearted apology for the fact that the statements made by them in the House don't always accord with the facts; I appreciate that. Unfortunately, the minister's story just doesn't hold up against an increasing lineup of municipal officials. He has a ward 5 councillor whom he refers to, and we have a resolution of the Sudbury city council. That ward 5 councillor must have voted against it. They're saying that the fairer deal is going to mean higher property taxes.

Last Friday, the mayor of St. Thomas sent Mr. McGuinty a letter, and I'll quote from that letter: "Our city treasurer advised council that the impact of [your new program] would result in an annual, ongoing reduction of \$1,445,700 ... we are concerned about this impending revenue loss ... [which] would translate into a 5% increase in property taxation."

Minister, why are you and your Minister of Agriculture so determined to hand St. Thomas taxpayers a 5% property tax increase, and when are you going to fess up about it?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Again, I go back to the mess we are correcting that was created by the previous government: the downloading exercise, loading on to municipalities services that cost them an enormous amount of money.

Again, I would say to the people of Ontario—listen carefully—we now have a fair and equitable formula that treats small and medium-sized municipalities well; that recognizes the special needs of the north; that recognizes the special needs of policing in our smaller communities. Every single community in the province of Ontario will get at least as much money from the provincial government in 2005 as they did in 2004. We have a fair and equitable solution to this problem that I think the people of Ontario will be appreciative of.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.  
1420

**Mr. Tory:** My question is again to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I would draw to the attention of the public that what we're seeing again this afternoon is a great attempt to bamboozle them, as we did last week. But we'll try another one.

I will quote from the St. Catharines Standard from last Wednesday: "In all, after a previous one-time grant and new gas-tax revenue ... is factored, there will be around \$5 million less handed out than there was last year in Niagara."

Thorold will receive no funding from your so-called fairer deal. Thorold's director of finance says, "The loss of the \$387,000 in our budget will negatively impact on our levy and tax rates by close to 6%."

Minister, Thorold's numbers are confirmed by the Ministry of Finance's Web site. Why are you hurting taxpayers in Thorold and across Niagara region? Why are you hurting your good friend whom you can normally rely on for such co-operation, the member for Niagara Centre, and forcing a 6% tax increase on his residents? Why are you doing that?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me just say once again that the actual money the municipalities are getting this year is \$38 million more than last year. It's a 6.1% increase. In addition to that, there is an additional \$230 million to deal with the 2003-04 reconciliation and to make sure that every municipality gets at least as much money as last year.

The system we've initiated is fairer to the municipalities involved. Talk to any municipal leader out there, or a group of them, and you'll find out that the old system simply didn't work equitably and fairly. We are a government that's for fairness. This is the way we felt we should deal with it. It's fairer to the municipalities than the ill-begotten system that they initiated a number of years ago.

**Mr. Tory:** I'm coming to understand that the Pembroke Daily Observer, the St. Catharines Standard, the Greater Sudbury council and the mayor of St. Thomas—these people are all wrong, your Web site at the Ministry of Finance is wrong, and you're right.

But let's try another one. The Ministry of Finance Web site shows that the county of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry will lose \$5.1 million in annual funding under this latest McGuinty Liberal scheme, brought in with the enthusiastic support of the local Liberal member. According to the county treasurer, Vanessa Bennett—I'm sure we're going to hear she's wrong too—the county received just over \$1 million as an advance for 2006. She's quoted as saying, "It looks like that's a windfall but we learned from Queen's Park that it is a pre-payment of what we are entitled to in 2006."

Minister, how can it be that everybody else is wrong but you? And why are you and the member for Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh and the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell causing this big property tax increase for these people?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** In actual fact, the residents of Niagara are getting 22.5% more this year than last year, and the region of Niagara is getting 10% more than last year. There are some municipalities that may not be getting in the long run, years down the road, as much as they were getting before, but, quite frankly, we wanted a system that was fair to municipalities. We wanted to make sure that their social service costs were going to be covered to a greater extent. We wanted to make sure there was true equalization. And we wanted to make sure that the smaller rural and northern municipalities got the kind of protection they needed. The new system is fairer. No municipality is getting less this year than they did before, plus there is a \$230-million transition fund that every municipality in this province will benefit from.

**Mr. Tory:** I think they think that the more ministers repeat this whole thing, the more often, on more days, it might become true. But let's just deal with the numbers. I've referenced these numbers from the ministry's own Web site. Your so-called fairer deal for municipalities actually is a \$47-million cut from the previous programs brought in under previous governments. Property taxes are going up as a result—5% in St. Thomas, 6% in Thorold and an astonishing 10.5% in Chatham—and we hear silence from the local members.

Your Minister of Finance has been caught including next year's money this year to try to bamboozle the public in this manner. Why don't you just own up and junk this ill-considered McGuinty Liberal scheme to raise property taxes on all those people around the province? Own up and junk it.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** We know that the Leader of the Opposition is a great defender of the status quo. The status quo would have meant that the funding to Caledon in your own riding would be cut by \$1.2 million. The status quo would mean that Kawartha Lakes would get \$2.7 million less, that Gananoque would get \$302,000 less, that Pembroke would get \$418,000 less and Smith Falls \$568,000 less.

We are not in favour of the status quo. We want to move forward in a program you created that was totally inequitable to the municipalities involved, taking into account the realities of 2005. You're for the status quo. We are for going forward to make sure that municipalities are healthy. That's why we introduced the COMRIF program today. That's why we've approved more equitable long-term funding for municipalities with this program.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. Last week I asked the McGuinty government to commit itself to implement the 85 recommendations from the Casa Verde nursing home coroner's inquest, 85 recommendations that would improve long-term care for Ontario seniors. Sadly, your Minister of Health would give no such commitment. The Casa Verde nursing home coroner's inquest shows that too many seniors living in long-term-care homes aren't being looked after properly, are not being cared for properly.

My question is this: You've now had an opportunity to read and consider the recommendations of the Casa Verde nursing home coroner's jury. Will you commit today to implementing the recommendations of that coroner's inquest?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** You can rely very, very heavily on the commitment of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to do everything possible to protect patients, to protect people in long-term care. You can rely on that not just from what he said last week but by what he's done and what this government has done. We've invested \$191 million for



2,000 new staff, including 600 new nurses. We have brought in a higher standard of care than has been evident under any previous government in terms of long-term care.

You should know as well that there have been revisions in terms of the standards for unannounced inspections. There were 482 unannounced annual inspections and 2,528 unannounced compliance visits last year, a 61% increase.

We have the commitment of the minister in this House and we have the actions of that minister and this government to protect patients in a manner that has not happened in this province before. And it's not simply a record that we stand on but one which is an indication of further improvements to come.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, the Casa Verde nursing home inquest has some very specific recommendations, and once again I'm appalled that this government can't commit to them.

Acting Premier, I'm going to send you over something that many of Ontario's frail seniors are too familiar with. It's an undergarment for incontinent seniors. When it's 80% full, it turns blue. Workers at Extendicare nursing home in St. Catharines are not allowed to change the undergarments of incontinent residents until they turn blue, even if they know that an incontinent senior is sitting in their own urine or feces for hours at a time. If it's 20% or 50% or 75% full, it can't be changed—only when it's 80% full, when it turns blue.

Imagine yourself in that situation. Imagine the embarrassment, the humiliation. Imagine being dependent upon someone to help you, but they won't help you because the rules don't allow them to. You can do something about this, Minister. Will you?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** The member opposite has already heard that the answer is yes, we are doing something about this. We are making more likely than ever before a standard of care in this province that we all can be proud of.

I say to the member opposite that any of us could be in those beds or in those incontinence diapers and we would want to be treated with dignity and respect. I would say there's a judgment on every member of this House and every government that has held responsibility in this House, and this government has acquitted itself better than any before and is striving, with \$191 million in more resources, on behalf of that very person and every person who finds themselves in a vulnerable position in long-term care.

Other governments spent money on bricks and mortar. We have put the money into nurses and into the quality of care. For the member opposite to show his genuine interest, he has at least to acknowledge that there is a marked increase in the value of care and the compassion that's able to be shown in those facilities, and he can depend on this government to continue to improve that.

1430

**Mr. Hampton:** What I acknowledge is that before the election, Dalton McGuinty promised \$420 million a year

in new funding for long-term care. After the election, the promise changed to \$191 million a year, but what is delivered is \$116 million, only a quarter of what was promised.

The reality is that too many seniors across this province are lying and sitting in their own waste for hours because the improvements in long-term care aren't being made. That's the reality that saddens and discourages staff who work in nursing homes. That's the reality that saddens and discourages family members who see an elderly parent lying and sitting in their own waste for hours.

Your government promised to do something about that before the election. So far, very little is being done. You've got 85 recommendations from the Casa Verde nursing home inquest. Will you implement them? Will we see the revolution in long-term care, or is this just another broken McGuinty promise?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** You may think you are channeling, on behalf of people out there, a genuine concern. What I see instead is an opportunity to turn this into some kind of spectacle. I say to you and I say to the other members opposite that when you've got in the order of 2,500 new inspections taking place, when you have new standards that were not there before for nurses, when you have the ability for spouses to be reunified, for families to have consideration for the first time, to actually have protection take place in those homes, you see the extension of compassion from this House into actual services in every community in this province.

For the member opposite to somehow infer otherwise, that the initial investments of this government, which are substantial, have not resulted in that, is to mislead families and others. We have a genuine reason to be vigilant and to have concern, but that expectation has been fully delivered on and will continue to be delivered by a Minister of Health who has exerted his full energy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. New question.

**Mr. Hampton:** To the Acting Premier: The Acting Premier lectures on about dignity and respect. What we see is vulnerable children being forgotten by this government: the poorest of children having their money clawed back and children who are autistic being told before the election that they'll continue to receive IBI treatment, but after the election, no such thing.

Before the election, we were told that seniors living in long-term care were going to see a real progressive change, were going to see over \$400 million invested so they'd get better care. After the election, it seems like they're being forgotten. Your minister promised legislation last fall to improve long-term care. Where is it? Nobody has seen it. He quotes regulations that aren't being enforced and he hides behind service agreements that aren't being honoured. A year and a half ago, he shed tears; since then, we've seen almost nothing. Where is the revolution in long-term care for vulnerable seniors that the McGuinty government has promised?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** The average Ontarian watching the procedures of this House may be wondering, is it possible that somehow the member opposite has an abiding interest in getting something done that isn't being done, or is it possible that he is actually the member of a government that promised to get rid of food banks, to do something on behalf of hungry kids, but instead abandoned that promise faster than they could shred the Promises for People that it was built on? This was in fact not a cornering of that kind of concern and not a reflection, in today's issues, on what can be done for people beyond what the government is doing.

We have committed ourselves very fully to take responsibility. The Minister of Health has stood in this House on occasion after occasion and made announcements of improvement in the standards, and those improvements have translated, as I've already related, into \$191 million worth of more services, 2,000 more staff to provide compassionate care, 600 nurses returned from some of the neglected previous governments to have them there in the first place—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Hampton:** Last week, the Casa Verde jury said, "Nursing homes are in dire need of more funding, stiffer regulations and better-trained workers." Well, we haven't seen more funding. You're delivering less funding than you promised. The minister cites regulations that we know aren't being enforced, and we've shown you examples last week of where workers are being laid off—not trained and hired, but laid off.

The minister says the revolution is underway. Well, from the perspective of seniors, from the perspective of workers who work in nursing homes, and from the perspective of families, it's not underway, Minister. When you promise \$400 million before the election and it becomes \$191 million after the election, but only \$116 million is actually delivered, that's not an improvement for people. You're not even coming close to your own promises.

Minister, where is the revolution you promised? Where's the legislation? Where's the money? Where's the training? Where are the new nurses and personal care workers that we need to look after our seniors?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Again, there is the artificial cultivation of alarm on the member's behalf across. Two thousand new workers are there and present in those homes, 600 nurses included. We have people like Greg Fougère, the chair of the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, saying there has been a lot done in the past year with the revolution in long-term care, and we see this government moving on many fronts to improve care and services for seniors. There are objective people in the community who are seeing the improvements they waited too long for from previous governments.

We don't say that this is all the improvement that can be done or that should be done, and the Minister of Health has been first among those to put every available

resource that he can in smart places, not just with the dollars, but with the inspections, the regulation, and the training and other things that he's put forward in this sector. We have, for the first time, a champion in the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for all the vulnerable seniors in long-term-care facilities. This government is, frankly, quite proud of the record that we have and the future that people in those homes have: a constant improvement, from a government that does finally care.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, Acting Premier, I want to remind you of some of the key findings of the Casa Verde nursing home inquest jury.

First, a minimum nursing staff or personal care staff to resident ratio: That's something you promised and something you haven't done.

Another one: using permanent staff rather than contracting out. That's something you used to talk about.

Another one: mandatory reporting by long-term-care facilities on how the nursing and personal care envelope is spent. We've already had examples last week where that's not happening.

Major changes to the way in which residents with dementia are cared for: That's something you used to talk about. That's not happening.

Revisions to the funding model: Before the election, you said over \$400 million a year. Now that's not happening.

Minister, how can you continue to rant on with things that are not happening, things that are not being done to protect our seniors, when you know very well from your own promises before the election and the Casa Verde inquest after the election that these things need to be done? You promised them. Casa Verde says they need to happen. Where are they?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** They are out there, thankfully, in the real world, where seniors are, where they depend on the services this government is providing, and which the artificial rhetoric of the member opposite is not accurately representing.

For example, I quote from the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors saying as recently as a few days ago that at Dufferin Oaks, the community of management has supported significant staffing increases in the past year: May 1, we increased nursing and personal care staffing by 134 hours per week. In January 2005, despite a fall in CMI that measures the difficulty, we have another 117 hours. With these enhancements, we now have 2.45 hours per resident a day.

Real improvements for every vulnerable senior are taking place in those quiet places. We've heard those noises of people who otherwise would be unattended. This government prides itself on its civility and its purpose for being here and making sure that those people get attended to. Under our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and our Premier and this government, they are



being listened to and those services are being delivered, despite what the member opposite tries to make of it.

1440

### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** A question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Clause 6(1)(b) of your Greenbelt Act gives you the authority—and, I suggest, the responsibility—to set out “policies to support coordination of planning and development programs of the various ministries of the government of Ontario.” I would remind you that your act will be in force for a minimum of 10 years.

Minister, given your responsibilities under the Greenbelt Act, what intervention did you make or have you made with the Minister of Finance to ensure that greenbelt municipalities are not negatively affected by the new Dalton McGuinty funding formula for municipalities?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** Let me say once again that your funding formula to municipalities under the old CRF program was totally fallacious. It didn't make any sense. Some municipalities were getting \$30,000 and other municipalities in similar circumstances were getting well over \$1 million. It didn't make any sense. We simply felt that it was time to put a new—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The minister used some rather unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw it.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I'll withdraw whatever—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

I just ask for you to withdraw that. That's all I need.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I withdraw, Speaker.

All I can tell you is that the new formula is fairer to municipalities. It will assist municipalities with social program costs. It will assist and respond to policing costs, particularly in rural municipalities, which vary greatly right across this province. It will provide for much better equalization and will recognize the unique challenges facing northern and rural communities. That's what the program is about. There is \$233 million in transition funding, and the funding for this year alone is up by 6.1% over what that government spent before.

**Mr. Hudak:** Obviously, a disappointing response by the minister. I asked a very simple question: Did he intervene or not with the Minister of Finance to ensure that the greenbelt municipalities would not be negatively impacted by the new funding formula? The minister, sadly, reverted to his general speaking notes prepared for him on a different question entirely.

Minister, I'll give you some of the numbers here: Lincoln—in the greenbelt—cut by over \$1 million in ongoing funding from the CRF envelope; the region of Durham, \$337,000; Grimsby, over \$700,000; Niagara-on-the-Lake, \$1.3 million; Milton, \$1.2 million.

I remind you that your greenbelt plan freezes these municipalities. I find it hard to believe, and please tell me

it's not so, that you stood on the sidelines during the preparation of this funding formula. You didn't stand up for greenbelt municipalities; you didn't stand up for your legislation. Instead, you took a powder.

Minister, tell me it's not true. Tell me you'll fight for these greenbelt municipalities and make sure they don't get one dime cut from the municipal transfer.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** First of all, the municipalities in the greenbelt can certainly work within their boundaries to develop the way they normally want to. What we have done with the greenbelt law is protect those agricultural lands surrounding those municipalities that are very valuable to this province and that we want to protect so they can provide the produce for future generations. We've also protected those natural heritage systems of streams and watercourses in those areas. Those are the areas that the greenbelt is protecting, not only for this generation but for many, many generations to come.

We have been fair with the municipalities, both in the greenbelt legislation and in the funding legislation that we have in place for this year.

### SERVICES FOR THE HEARING-IMPAIRED

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** What we need is somebody in the greenbelt who will protect us from the Liberals.

I have a question to the Acting Premier. You will know that today we have with us a number of people in the east gallery who are parents of deaf children. They're upset at your government because your government has cut the funding to the Ontario society of the deaf early literacy consulting program for children. This particular program is extremely important, because it develops the curriculum needed for schools to be able to do their job when it comes to the instruction of these children, either in ASL or LSQ. Without that type of funding, there is no curriculum development, no training of the trainers, no support for the people who are going to be working one-on-one with the kids in the education system.

I have a question for you, Acting Premier, and it's a simple one: Are you prepared to restore the funding to this program to make sure that those kids get an equal opportunity when it comes to education? After all, you will know that deaf children are equal.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** Thank you for raising the question. We appreciate the presence here of members of the Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf. The organization was provided with a contract as part of the start-up of the infant hearing program, as I think the member is aware. Its work was very much appreciated. They were tasked with developing American sign language materials and resources for public education, and they did a tremendous job creating that as a method of communication for babies identified with permanent hearing loss.

Now that the infant hearing program is fully implemented, all the available funding is being utilized not for start-up but for actual direct service for those families.

Those resources are available through the infant hearing program or the Ontario Early Years centres. We want to be able to assure everyone that those services will be available there. If they choose ASL services, they will see the same level of service as those who choose oral language as a method of communication, as a result of the success of this program. That is as a result of the funding having served its purpose over those three years, as I believe the member knows.

**Mr. Bisson:** The problem is simply this: It's like locking these children in time. It's like saying, "We're going to take the curriculum development in Ontario for English and French kids and we're not going to spend any more money to develop curriculum and to support the children in our schools." Why would we do that to the deaf community? They need to have this type of work to develop the curriculum, to do the training and to give the support that's necessary for the kids. I can't understand why your government would all of a sudden think for some strange reason that the deaf community after today is not going to need more curriculum development. Get with it. You're the Minister of Education. You should know better.

I'm going to ask you the question again. It was a program that was started to assist those people who are training kids who are doing communication in either ASL or LSQ and give them the supports they need to go on with their education. Will you fund it? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** The member knew when he stood up in the House to address the question that the answer is yes, because the funding has already been given. The funding has gone to provide for, first of all, the development of a new program, the development of those materials. That's been done. The same amount of money—all of it, in fact, \$8.3 million—is going to the direct provision of the services that were done with the materials that this society developed very expertly and much to the benefit of infant children who need access to American sign language.

The member knew that when he raised the question. He shows the same cavalier respect for the facts as his leader when it comes to representing vulnerable people in this House. There may be other things—and I'm sure there are—that the society should be engaged in. They've expedited and conducted themselves in an exemplary fashion here, but the way you formed the question, the idea that somehow this money is not working on behalf of deaf children, is simply not accurate. I believe you knew that, and I believe this House deserves to know better, as does the public. All \$8.3 million is going into direct assistance to access educational services on the same basis as for the children with hearing of a different standard.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** My question is to the Minister of Education. As you know, the Lakehead District School Board continues to move toward the closure of many schools in the

Thunder Bay area. Seven are scheduled to close at the end of this year alone.

Minister, you have publicly stated that with the new closure guidelines in place, the board will have to meet the standards set by those guidelines in order to move forward with their present plan. In fact, you have made it clear that you will be appointing a facilitator to conduct an independent review into all the closures, including those scheduled for this year. Can you tell us today who that facilitator will be and provide some detail as to the scope of this review?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I'm happy to advise the member opposite, who has advocated quite strongly to make sure that the ultimate benefit is served, that all children across the province, including those in the Lakehead, benefit from a facilities policy that will, for the first time, put a balanced view forward.

We have said that for the boards that could not, for whatever reason, honour the moratorium, we would conduct an independent review. We have now appointed Dave Cooke, who is a former Minister of Education, to conduct that review, to look at whether the process that we have now put in place, that we've asked boards to follow in future, would significantly benefit communities for which interim work was done by boards even as the moratorium was taking place. I believe Mr. Cooke will help us to make sure that a review is done to ensure that the community of Thunder Bay and the surrounding communities of Lakehead region do not lose out from all the benefits that we're bringing forward in our new facilities policy.

1450

**Mr. Gravelle:** Clearly, a great deal is relying on the review that Mr. Cooke will be conducting, certainly for the schools that are scheduled to close and also for the board itself. As you are aware, this is an issue that has caused a great deal of controversy in our region, particularly as the board has publicly stated that they believe they followed the school closure guidelines you recently put in place. Presumably this will be for the facilitator to determine, which I believe begs a few questions: How much scope does the facilitator have? Will he meet with all the concerned groups as part of his review? Also, will his recommendations be binding? And, if I may, one more question: Will his report be presented to you before the end of this school year?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** The independent facilitator will look at the actions taken by the board in arriving at a decision. We set the guidelines as a province. We've set them newly as a government now, and we'll look at whether or not the spirit of the new guidelines was met by the actions undertaken while we asked for a moratorium. Yes, those decisions will be binding and can result in changed actions on the part of the board in terms of not being in compliance with the new guidelines. I will receive those recommendations directly, and the recommendations will also go to the board for any changes in their actions. In addition, we believe this can be done in



an expedited fashion, approximately two to two and a half weeks.

We will be able to talk to members of the affected communities, not to re-conduct public hearings but to talk to representatives of each of the school communities affected to show the respect that is implied in the policy: that every community should be respected for the value the schools provide to them as well as for the students who attend those individual institutions. I believe the outcome will not just be good but better for the kids in Lakehead and the communities there as well.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. On March 30, our leader, John Tory, asked you when farmers could expect the \$79 million you promised them. Your response was, "The MRI program has been in place for a number of years. ... the \$79 million that's going to flow is going to flow through the ... program, and those cheques should be in the mail within the next two to three weeks."

Well, that time has long since passed, and the farmers in my riding of Oxford haven't received anything. Farmers are calling me to say that they continue to call Agricorp, and the answer is the same: "The cheques have not been issued yet." What have you got to say to these hard-pressed farmers of Ontario? Where's the money, Minister?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** The cheques are flowing. The cheques started to flow last week. The \$79 million will flow quickly into farmers' hands. The comments he has made that they're not flowing—I don't know where he's getting that information, but the dollars are flowing. The provincial dollars will flow much quicker than the federal government dollars. If the honourable member has a constituent who would like to know the status of his market revenue cheque, I'd urge him to pick up the phone and contact my MPP liaison or call Agricorp directly.

**Mr. Hardeman:** Mr. Minister, that's exactly what I did. As recently as this morning, we called Agricorp, and they said the cheques haven't been issued and it could be another couple of weeks before the farmers get any money. I remind you that the day you made your announcement, you told farmers that the additional funds would be in their hands prior to the planting season. Well, farmers, at least those who can afford to, are in the field and planting now. Banks are refusing to loan farmers money to plant their crops this year because they have no faith in your commitment to Ontario's farmers.

Minister, I ask again, when will the farmers in my riding and the farmers in Ontario receive the help you promised and said you would deliver within two weeks? They have so far got absolutely nothing, and the people who issue the cheques said they have not issued the cheques as of today.

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** Unlike John Tory and the band of Tories, who advocate that our grain and oilseed farmers

should be getting away from grains and oilseeds crops and moving to organics, we believe in the grains and oilseeds industry, unlike John Tory and the Tories, who are prepared to abandon our farmers in this province. As well, I see they've struck a committee with member Yakabuski and member Hardeman to look at rural issues. It should be very interesting to see the influence that the Lanark Landowners' Association has on John Tory and Tory policy in this government.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I thought that the member from Oxford asked the question, and I hoped he would listen to the answer. New question.

#### DUFFINS-ROUGE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. On March 7, we asked to you uphold the agricultural easements on the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve, because the city of Pickering had just lifted them, to the delight of the Premier's and the Finance Minister's \$10,000-per-plate dinner guest Silvio DeGasperi. Despite your lack of concern at the time, we now learn that the head of the Ontario Realty Corp. and the Chair of Management Board, Gerry Phillips, see things differently. They believe the city of Pickering deceived the province and failed to honour a public trust, and are considering legal action. My question is, will you tell us today that the government will be taking the city of Pickering to court to fight their lifting of the agricultural easements on the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I would like to refer this question to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Indeed, I did send a letter to the city of Pickering on behalf of the government. I wanted to make it absolutely certain that the city of Pickering, and indeed the people of Ontario, understood the government of Ontario's firm commitment to ensure that the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve is preserved as agricultural land. That was the purpose of the letter, and it was clear to the city of Pickering that we have the full intention of making certain that is preserved. We look at all our options. Legal action is one option, but we'll make certain we take the necessary steps to protect that as an agricultural preserve, and that was the purpose of the letter I sent on behalf of the government.

**Ms. Churley:** Back to the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Pickering council's attempt to liberate the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve on behalf of Mr. DeGasperi and others is a strong statement on just how permanent developers perceive your greenbelt to be. They recognize that, contrary to your claims, one does not have to wait for a 10-year review to amend the greenbelt plan. You, Minister, have the power to initiate

amendments of the greenbelt plan at any time, and they know that. So Ontarians are legitimately concerned that the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve is just the tip of the iceberg and that there will be other areas within the greenbelt where developers are speculating that they can win the favour of government and get their lands removed.

My question: To stop this speculation by developers on the greenbelt, will you commit to passing NDP Bill 178, which will give Ontarians the permanent greenbelt you promised them and not the floating greenbelt you gave them?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I want to continue to state very clearly to the member, and indeed to the public, what we've stated in our communication with the city of Pickering: We are dedicated to preserving the Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve as agricultural land, and we are committed to preserving the integrity of our greenbelt legislation. The step I took last week on behalf of the government of Ontario was to make certain, in the particular case of this agricultural preserve, that there can be no confusion. We've made very clear to the city of Pickering our dedication and determination to make certain that we preserve that as an agricultural preserve, and we are taking the appropriate steps. I've indicated that one of the options we are looking at in making sure that is preserved is legal action. Make no mistake that we are dedicated to preserving that as an agricultural preserve and are taking, we think, the appropriate steps.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who I'm pleased to say sits in front of me, to my right. In North Bay, and in the House today, you announced the infrastructure investments that deliver on the McGuinty government's commitment to build strong and sustainable communities. My own community of Niagara Falls is the recipient of almost \$2 million, which is part of a \$6-million plan that will provide proper sewer infrastructure for my community to stop sewer backups and prevent flooding for residents in the older part of the city of Niagara Falls.

Minister, can you tell us how these infrastructure investments improve the quality of life for Ontario's rural towns, cities and villages?

1500

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I thank the member for his question and for all he does for Niagara Falls and the Niagara area.

I'm very proud that the government of Ontario has committed \$298 million to improve rural infrastructure over the next five years. Together with our municipal and federal partners, we will be investing over \$900 million in rural investments over the next five years. These investments are helping Ontario communities provide

clean, safe drinking water, better sewage systems, improved waste management and safer rural roads and bridges.

The COMRIF program's objective is to improve the quality of life of residents through projects that enhance and renew our infrastructure to protect the health and safety of citizens and to support long-term economic growth to build strong, sustainable and healthy communities.

**Mr. Craitor:** My supplementary question is again to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The benefits of this unique partnership between the province of Ontario and the federal government, known as COMRIF, will be felt across our great province. In the city of Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, projects for waste management separation were selected because of health and safety value-for-money and public priorities. I know my community is eager to start construction in the upcoming season. This initiative will be creating new jobs while improving local public services.

Minister, please explain how it came about that Niagara Falls and 119 other communities across Ontario are able to start constructing and improving public services in their communities this year.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** This is the first infrastructure partnership of its kind that joins the province, the federal government and AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, through a one-application process. That's never been done before. The governments of Canada and Ontario and AMO are working together to ensure that municipalities have the tools they need to improve essential rural infrastructure. Our government is the first government in Canada to sign this agreement, because we wanted to act quickly in the interests of all Ontarians.

As a result of today's investment announcements clear across this province, 120 communities will be provided with the support they need to renew essential infrastructure in their communities. We, the McGuinty government, are committed to rural Ontario, and COMRIF demonstrates our government's commitment.

#### POLICE SERVICES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. It involves the city of Guelph. I want to add right off the bat that Guelph has joined Club Zero as of 2006 under the Ontario municipal partnership fund.

In an article in the Guelph Mercury on Saturday, a spokesman from your ministry identified the latest in your arsenal of stalling tactics on your campaign promise to put 1,000 new police officers on our streets. I'll quote from the ministry spokesman, who says, "It's not just hiring the officers, but we also have to determine what areas need officers." That's exactly what the spokesperson from your ministry said.

May I remind you that your ministry doesn't hire the officers? Local police services do. These local police services also know better than anyone else in the



province what areas of policing require the officers most. When are you going to stop stalling on keeping this promise, let municipalities know how many officers they are actually getting and let local police services decide how they want the officers allocated?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I thank the member for the question. He obviously doesn't understand how the system works. Under the community policing program that his government initiated, it was a shared-cost program, with the government paying 50%, to a maximum of \$30,000 per officer. The ministry does not decide how many officers a particular municipality is going to have. The municipality has to decide how many officers they can afford, pegging their share of the cost.

What happens is that we are negotiating with police services across the province to determine what number of officers they would like to access. When they do that, and when we have them all in order so we know how many of the 1,000 are going to what particular police service, we will do it. We are absolutely committed, and I can give you my guarantee, that before this mandate is over, we will be putting 1,000 new officers in the streets and communities in Ontario.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Minister, in that same newspaper article, Guelph police chief Rob Davis, right in your parliamentary assistant's own riding, says he couldn't wait for the McGuinty government to make good on its promise to hire 1,000 new police officers. In fact, he hasn't even had a response from your office in over two months. Because of retirements, maternity leaves and injuries, he's had to hire new police officers, but he's not getting a single penny from the McGuinty government to pay for them.

Minister, if and when you finally get around to keeping your promise, will you reimburse the city of Guelph and other municipalities for the police officers they hire on their own in the meantime? Will you do that, since your Premier made the fancy announcement last year on October 24 when he announced that you'd be hiring 1,000 new police officers?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** Every police service in Ontario has retirements, attrition, things that are happening, and they have a complement that their local municipalities have decided they're prepared to fund. What we are talking about is an additional 1,000 officers. What is happening in a lot of communities is that they're saying, "This could be imminent, so why should we hire 100% dollars on police services when we can wait and get 50% dollars?" That is what is happening. But in the meantime, they have an obligation to maintain their police service at the complement they have. We are providing 1,000 extra officers on top of that.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Acting Premier. In the last election, your government campaigned on a platform of restoring

public services. To date, however, your record in office has been more about cutting those same services and handing out layoff notices to the workers.

Today we hear about another attempt to off-load valuable public services: the proposed privatization of air ambulances. Minister, air ambulances are a crucial public service, particularly in northern and rural Ontario, and it is the sole responsibility of the government. My question to you is simple: Will you rescind your government's decision to privatize this essential service?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I want to assure the member opposite that this government has in fact done the opposite of what he has said, which is to make \$3 billion worth of investments in health care, making them more accessible to people in every part of this province. The member opposite would well have taken note, I think, of the family health teams put forward last week to increase access in their own communities to services, some of which would have required air ambulance before.

The commitment we have is very, very clear: to invest at some cost, not just in dollars but in terms of political risk, because we think this is the right thing to do for the province to improve health care services. So I say to the member opposite, we guarantee that health care services are getting better, that wait lines are getting shorter, that services all around the province, far from being impaired, as the member implied, are actually going to be improved under this government's watch.

**Mr. Prue:** I listened to that whole response, and I'm going to check Hansard too. He never once mentioned the term "air ambulance." My question is about air ambulances.

The reality is that it is the government that has a responsibility to ensure that emergency air ambulance service is there for the people of Ontario in crisis situations, when they most desperately need it. Air ambulance services make 17,000 calls a year and are responsible for all of the people in Ontario. Off-loading that responsibility will prove to be a disaster. I ask you again, will you rescind your government's decision to privatize this vital service?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** It's clear that the member opposite is, like some of his colleagues, stuck somewhere in the middle of a process and not actually with delivering an outcome for a patient, for someone who needs a service.

Air ambulance service will not only continue but, like every other part of our valuable, publicly funded health services, we will endeavour to improve it. That has been our track record; that has been what we've done. There isn't an area you can point to, frankly, where the services haven't been improved.

1510

Your leader flailed away earlier, trying to talk about long-term care. Instead, that's improved. We say again, we will look at every area where we can find improvements, because we have that obligation. We don't have the luxury of being stuck in process like the third party or

stuck 25 years ago, like the third party. We have confidence in public services, and the only way those services engender confidence is when they work, when people can actually see that they get value for the dollars that are in.

So we are looking at all the different operations of government, but they are essentially public in nature, they are publicly controlled, and they will have, ultimately, the confidence of the public, which is something the third party forgot about how to do a long, long time ago.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, it's clear to me, as one who sat through the Bill 100 hearings, that the McGuinty government takes its commitment to the environment seriously. Announcing the appointment of Mr. Peter Love as Ontario's first chief electricity conservation officer during Earth Week was not just a coup, but a fitting reminder of that commitment.

Minister, I know that Mr. Love is a committed environmentalist who will be working as hard as he can to ensure that Ontario becomes a world leader in electricity conservation. That said, Minister, can you tell us a little bit more about Mr. Love's mandate and specifically what he'll be doing?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I note that the NDP leader shakes his head in opposition to this appointment, but let me say a few words about the chief energy conservation officer, the individual who will lead what will be responsible for helping the government meet its target to reduce peak electricity demand growth in Ontario by 5% by 2007.

The bureau will develop province-wide conservation programs to help consumers save energy and save money. It will promote energy conservation and the efficient use of electricity, it will assess the technical, economic and market potential for conservation in the province, and it will report on Ontario's progress in achieving its conservation targets and assess what further action is required. That is, we'll set targets and we'll mark progress so that there's openness and transparency and the people of Ontario can see whether or not this government or any future government is meeting its commitments with respect to that. This government still believes that a megawatt saved is every bit as good as a megawatt built.

**Mr. McMeekin:** Minister, you're just full of good news these days. Earlier last week you announced a new request for proposals for 1,000 megawatts of clean, renewable energy generation. You seem to be moving forward on all fronts, to be firing on all cylinders. What impact do you expect your announcement will have on our goal of increasing the amount of electricity generation that comes from clean, renewable power sources in Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The member is accurate. We're doing what John Tory and the Conservatives won't do: moving forward on renewable electricity. We're doing—

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** They liked coal.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Yes, John Tory and the Tories want more coal-fired generation in Ontario. We say no to that. We're doing what the NDP couldn't and wouldn't do when they were the government: We're adding wind power, solar power, biomass, geothermal, in a way that is prudent and responsible, that's delivered in a timely fashion and will lessen our dependence as the Tories don't want to do.

The Tories want more coal. They want more pollution. They don't seem to want to deal with childhood asthma. They don't want to deal with smog days in Algonquin Park. They don't want to deal with smog days in Toronto in February. The McGuinty government is taking a lead in North America in terms of shutting down our coal plants, replacing it with clean, renewable, affordable electricity that will serve our children and their children for many, many years to come.

### PETITIONS

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** This is a petition calling for "In-Depth Investigation of Judicial System.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Hon. Michael Bryant is minister responsible for democratic renewal; and

"Whereas the Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General of Ontario, is elected to safeguard our justice system on behalf of the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the ministry of our Attorney General may not be aware of the serious and important issues facing individuals involved in areas of the justice system even though the Attorney General's ministry is continually monitoring;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, ask the Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General, for his in-depth investigation of the Ontario judicial system and [to] make the public aware of his findings immediately."

I'm pleased to submit this on behalf of many, but my constituent Albert Werry has signed and dated this, and I'm pleased to endorse it myself.

#### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly from the Mississauga Board of Chinese Professionals and Businesses. CPB does a great job in our community, and I'm grateful for the help of André Mak, Rosie Yu, Winnie Tung and Cindy Chan. It reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established, Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and



"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved that....

"The government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I join with my colleague the member for Brampton in supporting this position. I affix my signature to it and I'll ask Taylor to carry it down for me.

### HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas noxious odours from the Halton recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

"Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face threats to their health and well-being and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

"Whereas, for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue."

As I am in agreement, I will sign my name to this petition.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's my pleasure to present a petition from a group of ratepayers in Oakville, Milton, Burlington and Richmond Hill because they're all in the catchment area of my local hospital, Credit Valley Hospital. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I support this wholeheartedly. I'll affix my signature to it and ask page Jonathan to carry it for me.

1520

### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth"—Alliston—"is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I want to thank Larry Whitmore of Loretto for helping circulate that petition, and I want to thank the CBC, which did an extensive program on this very issue on the weekend.

### VISITORS

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to recognize students here from John Diefenbaker school in Scarborough East, who are playing host to a group of about 30 students and their teachers from Elnora, Alberta. I want to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** It's not a point of order.

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** On behalf of everyone in Mississauga, we join with them in welcoming all of our colleagues from Scarborough here to the Legislature.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly from Lee Perrin on Lisgar Drive, in my home neighbourhood of Lisgar, in Mississauga. It reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established, Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved ...

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I thank Lee for sending in the petition. I affix my signature to it, and I'll ask Elizabeth to carry it down for me.

### ABORTION

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I have a petition from a number of people in my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury, or illness, and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 46,000 abortions in 1995 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

I assign my name to this, Mr. Speaker, and send it to you.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I'm pleased to present a petition sent to me by Roxanne Tang, who is actually from Markham, like a number of others who are

workers at the Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million"—and counting—"of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I support this petition wholeheartedly. This is my community hospital. I'll ask Jonathan to carry it for me.

### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It's one of the petitions from the Huronia Regional Centre.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia



Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this.

#### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's my pleasure to read a petition sent to me by Joseph Clegg and some of his friends and neighbours from Barcella Crescent in Mississauga. It's to protect anaphylactic students and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to support the petition, and to ask Inderraj to carry it for me.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition signed by a number of individuals and veterans from the Preston, Hespeler and Galt Canadian Legions.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities as well; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas by imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intentions of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario exempt Legion halls, navy clubs and other non-profit, private or veterans' clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

#### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To immediately commit to action and funding to ensure the rights and protection of our citizens living in nursing homes and retirement homes in Ontario."

It goes on to say:

"This is in support of the petition of Joan Faria which is currently before the Legislature."

I have signed this petition.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Again, a petition from the Huronia Regional Centre.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental disabilities, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign this, and give it to Sean to deliver to you.

1530

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE TRANSPORT

Mr. Takhar moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 169, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to amend and repeal various other statutes in respect

of transportation-related matters / *Projet de loi 169, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et modifiant et abrogeant diverses autres lois à l'égard de questions relatives au transport.*

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I will be sharing my time with Dr. Kular, the MPP from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, and my parliamentary assistant Mr. Lalonde, the MPP from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell.

In leading off debate on this bill, I would like to underscore that at its very heart is the fundamental issue of public safety: safety for children at school crossings, safety for senior citizens at crosswalks, safety for highway construction workers, safety for taxi passengers, safety for student drivers and for people commuting to work, safety for truckers and for northern residents driving in harsh winter weather conditions; in short, safety for all Ontarians.

The facts are very clear: Fatalities are down. We have the lowest fatality rate ever recorded on Ontario roads. In fact, they're the lowest in North America. I'm very proud of this great record, but over 800 people still died on our roads in 2003.

The sad reality is that speed kills, and it keeps on killing. Too many people are dying while simply crossing the road. Fifteen thousand pedestrians have been struck or killed in the past five years. People driving 50 kilometres per hour over the limit are almost 10 times more likely to hurt or kill someone. In 2003, speeding or loss of control was a factor in about 44% of all deadly crashes. Those collisions took the lives of more than 300 people—to be exact, the number was 363.

We want and need to address the issue of speeders. If the bill passes, we plan to give them longer licence suspensions. The bill proposes to increase fines for those who drive 30 kilometres over the limit. It would also allow the courts to impose licence suspensions of up to one year on those who are convicted of repeatedly driving 50 kilometres over the posted limit.

If this legislation passes, it would be an offence to ignore "stop" or "slow" signs on road work zones. That is important, because over five years there have been more than 11,000 collisions on our roads. Fifty people have died. That is why we are getting tougher with speeders. We want fines doubled for speeding in highway construction zones and doubled for those drivers who ignore the rules at school and pedestrian crossings. We are doing what we can to improve safety. Right now, 45% of pedestrians killed are struck at marked crossings.

We would also improve truck safety with more rigorous daily inspections. There would be tough new rules targeting those who operate illegal taxis, limousines and passenger vans. There would be tougher standards for driving schools offering ministry-approved courses.

The police would be able to clear highway collisions more quickly. We need to do that in order to keep our highways moving. That would ease driver frustration and help the economy. A major crash on the 401 can not only

tie up traffic but lead to all sorts of secondary collisions as well.

To save lives, the bill proposes to allow a new generation of studded tires to be used in the icy winter conditions of northern Ontario.

When I introduced this legislation, the opposition parties knew it was the right thing to do, but they choose to say that the legislation won't work. But road construction workers support it, and truckers are keen to do their part. Municipalities are pleased with what we are doing. We are adding provincial rules to crack down on speeders on local roads.

Police support this law. Let's listen to what police and others say about this bill. Staff Sergeant Tom Carrique of York Regional Police said, "Anything we can do to deal with speeding will make our roads safer." The Metroland papers said, "Peel Regional Police are lauding the bill." The Woodstock Sentinel-Review said, "A step toward pedestrian safety," and the Ottawa Citizen said, "This is the right move."

When the opposition criticizes the proposal of studded tires, they should think again about parents in the north who will have greater mobility to get their sick children to the hospital. Ontario has the safest roads in North America, and every time we toughen road safety laws, we get results: People now wear seat belts; getting tough on drunk drivers has clearly saved lives; introducing mandatory bike helmets for children has saved untold grief.

Ontario will continue to lead the way in road safety, thanks to responsible citizens, educational campaigns, fine police officers, good roads and sound laws like the bill we are debating here this afternoon. Bill 169 demonstrates that we can, must and will do more to make our roads even safer. That is why I urge honourable members on all sides of the House to give this legislation their enthusiastic support.

1540

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It's a pleasure and an honour to participate in the debate on Bill 169, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and to amend and repeal various other statutes in respect of transportation-related matters.

Bill 169 contains a package of integrated measures: short-term measures and long-term measures; measures to improve road safety; measures to ease the congestion on the roads in our province; measures to help increase transit ridership. This proposed bill also meets our government's commitment by allowing studded tire use in the northern part of this province.

This bill would also support the McGuinty government's growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. This wide-ranging package of legislative measures proposed by the honourable Minister of Transportation is pragmatic, sensible and very much in the interests of all Ontarians. As the minister has pointed out over and over, the bill is about safety on our highways and local streets. Pedestrians, especially seniors and schoolchildren, are the most vulnerable road users. If passed, this bill would enhance the existing rules to improve safety at school



crossings, pedestrian crossovers, and crosswalks at traffic signals. Drivers who disobey these rules and put pedestrians at risk would be subject to increased penalties.

This bill would target illegal, unlicensed taxis and limousine scoopers who gouge unsuspecting travellers. For example, last year I was travelling across Ontario during the public meetings and consultations, listening to Ontarians with disabilities, their family members and other stakeholders. Once I had to fly back from northern Ontario. When I landed at Pearson airport, I was picked up by a scooper. Normally, it costs about \$45 from the airport to my home in Bramalea. When I got out of his car, he asked me for a \$100 bill. I was taken aback. This bill will handle these kinds of scoopers.

It will also single out fraudulent driving schools which offer false certification to student drivers.

These are all things that Ontarians want addressed.

More than 15,000 pedestrians have been hurt or killed while crossing the street during the past five years in this province of ours. Almost half of the fatal collisions on our roads are tied to speeding or loss of control. Over a five-year period, there were nearly 12,000 incidents in road construction zones, and those crashes resulted in almost 3,500 injuries, and the loss of about 50 lives. That's why this bill is important.

Through a combination of good laws, excellent policing, proper roads, public education and the basic thoughtfulness of Ontario drivers, our province has the safest roads in North America, with the lowest rate of fatalities per 10,000 licensed drivers.

But being the best isn't enough when the number of pedestrians being run down is still unacceptably high. It's not enough when the current law only allows for a 30-day licence suspension no matter how often someone is convicted of driving more than 50 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. It's not enough when illegal taxis and limousines are scooping unsuspecting customers at Pearson International Airport. It's not good enough when fenders and grilles are flying off poorly maintained vehicles on our busy highways.

There would be increased penalties if this bill passes. The fine would be \$210 and four demerit points on convictions for going 30 kilometres per hour over the posted speed limit. There would be lengthier, court-ordered, suspension periods for drivers convicted of repeat offences of speeding 50 kilometres an hour or more above the posted limit, occurring within five years of a preceding offence. The vast majority of road users view this category of speeders as both intimidating and reckless.

The fines for speeding would be doubled for offences in work zones when workers are present.

It would be an offence under the Highway Traffic Act to pick up a passenger for compensation without a proper licence or permit. It would help deter identity theft by significantly increasing the penalty for having or using a fictitious, fraudulent or imitation driver's licence.

This bill is not just about going after the bad guys or after the bad drivers, as important as that is; it's also

about working cooperatively and effectively with the good drivers. This bill allows our police officers more authority to order the clearing of collisions or spills or debris on a highway. At the present time, the Ontario Provincial Police have to wait for approval of trucking or insurance companies to get things cleared away. We think that the police should have the power to use their professional judgment to deal with serious highway problems and to get our highways moving again. This is vitally important for export economies such as ours, where 60% of all delays on highways are the result of collisions, spills or debris.

This bill is about working with 553,000 commercially licensed bus and truck drivers in Ontario. Over the past 15 years, the number of large trucks on our highways has increased by about 45%, but the number of fatalities involving trucks has decreased by close to 27%. Our truckers are doing a great job, and soon they will be able to do even more to make our roads even safer. They would examine more than 70 vehicle parts on every commercial vehicle every day. That is three times more than they do now. Trucks move over \$1.2 trillion of goods on Ontario's roads annually, and I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to our truckers for taking on responsibility in doing even more to improve highway safety.

This legislation would also give the professionals who monitor and oversee our highways the authority to set varied speed limits.

For people in northern Ontario, this bill proposes to allow the use of a new, more environmentally friendly generation of studded tires. Research shows that studded tires can reduce collisions on icy roads. This is something that our Liberal MPPs from the north have been advocating for many years.

This government, the McGuinty government, has moved to promote transit by providing \$1 billion to municipalities from gas tax revenues.

The honourable Minister of Transportation is working to promote measures that would improve public transit, our environment, our quality of life, and commuter congestion. Bill 169 would protect school kids and senior citizens. It would protect sensible and responsible drivers. It would protect more than eight million Ontario drivers who follow the rules of the road. This bill is about education, enforcement and the consequences, and most importantly it's about saving lives. I ask all the members of the Legislature to act to pass this legislation as quickly as possible. We have the safest highways and streets in North America, based on the rate of fatalities. Let's work together to make them even safer.

1550

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I am delighted to stand in the House today and speak about a healthier and safer Ontario. Since the Minister of Transportation introduced a transit and road safety bill, we have received overwhelming support and endorsement from stakeholders, from the police, from municipalities and from the public at large. The minister

has already dealt with the provision of the bill covering pedestrian safety, speeding and other enforcement issues.

Permettez-moi de passer en revue les dispositions du projet de loi 169, axées sur les transports en commun, et de réaffirmer l'engagement de notre gouvernement aux transports en commun de l'Ontario.

Au cœur de notre vision de collectivités vigoureuses figure la stratégie de notre gouvernement, visant à planifier et à bâtir un réseau de transports en commun intégré, sécuritaire et fiable pour tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes.

Ontario's 83 transit systems together move some 680 million passengers every year. GO Transit carries 44 million riders annually. The TTC, Canada's largest transit system, carries 1.15 million passengers daily. Meanwhile, the average car in Toronto carries only 1.16 people—yes, only 1.16 person per car. A single GO bus can replace 50 cars, and a GO train would replace 1,400 cars.

Notre gouvernement est conscient du fait que nous devons investir, oui, investir aussi bien dans les réseaux routiers que dans les transports en commun pour réduire les embouteillages. Nous devons bâtir un réseau de transports en commun pratique et coordonné qui offre au voyageur une vraie solution de rechange à l'utilisation de leur propre voiture. S'il est adopté, oui, avec l'appui des trois partis de cette Assemblée, le projet de loi sur les transports en commun et la sécurité routière améliorera nos réseaux de transports en commun.

Le projet de loi permettrait de désigner et de faire respecter des voies réservées aux véhicules transportant plusieurs passagers en plus d'encourager le covoiturage. Il permettrait que des terrains soient réservés à de nouveaux parcs de covoiturage et à des stations de transports en commun pendant les étapes de planification. Il réduirait la durée des trajets à faire la navette, tout en permettant aux véhicules de transports en commun d'avoir la priorité aux feux de circulation, et de prolonger le feu vert ou de faire passer un feu rouge au vert plus rapidement. Oui, j'ai bien mentionné que les transports en commun auront priorité aux feux de circulation.

Those proposed measures would help to improve transit in real terms. If this bill is passed, we will have HOV lanes on Highway 403 in Mississauga and Highway 404 just north of Toronto. "HOV" stands for "high-occupancy vehicle."

Each car taken off the road through carpooling or public transit will save approximately three tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually, and that means cleaner air for everyone to breathe.

À l'heure l'actuelle, on estime qu'à l'heure de pointe du matin, 7 000 personnes empruntent l'autoroute 403 à l'intersection de Mavis Road en direction de Toronto. La plupart de ces personnes voyagent seules dans leur véhicule, ce qui correspond à environ 20 000 sièges vides.

It is estimated that one year after HOV lanes open on the 403 this fall, 650 vehicles an hour will use them. Carpoolers and buses using HOV lanes will be able to save

as much as 11 minutes from their trips—yes, a shorter time on the road.

La disposition de ce projet de loi vise à améliorer les transports en commun et à réduire le temps de déplacement.

By investing in transit, we will reduce the congestion that slows economic activities and robs Ontarians of their quality family time. Also, investing in transit will improve air quality, conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The McGuinty government will give municipalities \$1 billion in gas tax funding over the next five years for public transit, and a total of 83 transit systems serving 110 municipalities across the province are now receiving stable and long-term funding from the gas tax to improve their transit services.

Il va de soi que l'amélioration du service encouragera un plus grand nombre de personnes à utiliser les transports en commun. C'est cela notre but principal : accroître le nombre de personnes qui utilisent les transports en commun.

Grâce au financement provenant de la taxe provinciale sur l'essence et l'appui financier des trois paliers du gouvernement pour les transports en commun, le gouvernement de l'Ontario appuie les municipalités en leur donnant les fonds nécessaires pour faire l'acquisition de 1 800 nouveaux autobus. La province a signé une entente avec le gouvernement fédéral et la ville de Toronto en vue d'injecter conjointement 1 \$ milliard destiné au financement de la nouvelle infrastructure de la CTT.

As for Ottawa, up to \$600 million will be spent by the province, the federal government and the city of Ottawa to develop a light rail transit system. On top of all that, the province and the government of Canada have agreed to invest another \$1 billion to upgrade and expand GO Transit.

Il me fait plaisir d'annoncer que nous faisons de réels progrès, et ce n'est que le début. Des collectivités vigoureuses dépendent de réseaux de transports en commun fiables, et les transports en commun ont besoin de l'appui du gouvernement.

Transportation affects all of us, and this bill is a key piece to creating a world-class transportation system.

The McGuinty government has a healthier and safer vision for Ontario. I am counting on your enthusiastic support for the passing of this bill.

Je compte sur votre soutien enthousiaste.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'll be speaking to this bill a little later on, but with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment today.

First of all, I'd like to welcome the pages to Queen's Park. I know you're here for four or five weeks. In particular, I'd like to welcome a young man named Sean McConkey, who is here today. Why I say that is Sean's aunt and uncle, Laura and Terry Gregson, are close friends of my wife's and mine. They've both recently retired—Laura as an executive with the Co-operators and



Terry as a referee in the National Hockey League. Sean comes from a very interesting family. Sean also has an uncle, Doug Riseborough. For the folks here in the House, Doug Riseborough is the general manager of the Minnesota Wild of the National Hockey League.

1600

Not every time we get an opportunity to stand and speak in this House is it about someone we know. Terry and Laura are really good friends of my wife Jane's and mine. We've had a lot of good times. They have a new condo up at Intrawest in Jim Wilson's riding. I can tell you that they're great people.

I just want to say, on behalf of the folks in our caucus, welcome to all the pages. I know you're going to have a great time here over the next four or five weeks. In particular, I want to welcome Sean. I just got this e-mail, so I understand I'm going to be having lunch with Sean's aunt and uncle some time next week here at Queen's Park, when they come to see Sean in action. Sean, it's great to have you here, and you do have a good member over here. The member from Brant is a good MPP. We've had our clashes in the past. You'll enjoy your time here, as all of you will.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** So little to say about so much. What is happening here? We had three honourable members from the government side—the minister, the parliamentary assistant and the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale—who I would have thought would have had more to say on this legislation.

This is a little bit of an omnibus bill when it comes to transportation. There are some good-news items inside the bill that I'm prepared to support. I would think that this government would have stood up with glowing hearts, talking about the wonderful things contained inside this bill, but three people for the lead speech and they can't even go an hour. Try being in opposition, where my good friend the critic for the Tory party or myself, I can guarantee you, will be taking their full hour.

There's much to say. We can talk about the need to have more police on roads. We can fine all we want, but at the end of the day we need to have somebody to enforce these things if we want to have a real impact. We're going to talk about taxi drivers when it comes to our side, because—you'll know, Mr. Speaker; you met with some of the same individuals I have who are in the profession of driving taxis in the city of Toronto and who are really worried about one part of the provisions in this bill.

There are a number of things to speak to, and I can't believe that only a mere 30 minutes could be made in the lead by three honourable members from the other side, who I know have lots to say.

For example, mon ami M. Lalonde, un membre distingué de cette Assemblée, quelqu'un avec expérience, qui a travaillé dans le secteur municipal pendant des années, justement comme maire de Vanier—combien d'années mon ami a-t-il été le maire de Vanier—a beaucoup à dire sur la question des transports. Je ne crois pas

que l'adjoint parlementaire, mon ami M. Lalonde, et son ministre et son collègue de Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale peuvent prendre seulement une trentaine de minutes.

What is this world coming to? I don't know, but we'll soon find out.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I wish to commend the minister for bringing this legislation forward. There are very many items related to safety, but there are also items related to conservation and to transportation demand management, which is extremely important.

The Planning Act is amended so that approval of subdivision plans may be subject to the condition that land be dedicated for commuter parking lots, transit stations and related infrastructure. This was mentioned by the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. It's extremely important that these infrastructures, which cost a lot of money, are going to be part of the planning process and the dollars are going to be in the subdivision agreements as they move forward.

One of the other areas is the high-occupancy vehicle lanes, which are extremely important. We have a bridge that's been in the making between Ontario and Quebec in my community. One of the issues I've argued about for many years is that it's going to put a lot of strain on my community of Ottawa-Orléans. I feel we should go back to the good old days. I remember working at the National Research Council back in 1954 and a Ford Fairlane my brother had. There used to be six of us who drove in that every day to work because we realized that we couldn't all afford to take our cars to work. But as the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell says, today the occupancy of vehicles is 1.16 on our highways. We're just not thinking of conservation; we're not thinking of preserving the environment.

These are excellent things. When I see that bridge from Quebec being built, I hope that we restrict traffic during peak hours on that bridge to high-occupancy vehicle lanes; I think that's what we should demand. We're going to give people a new opportunity to get to work more quickly, but let's make them carpool and do the right thing for the environment, for themselves and for their pocketbooks.

I really like this bill. It's moving in the right direction. I commend the minister for bringing it forward.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I'm pleased to join the debate in regard to Bill 169. In particular, it's very topical because health and education have always topped the concerns in my riding. But during the last five years, it has been quite noticeable that gridlock has joined those two as a great concern for Cambridge. In particular, Cambridge now exceeds 100,000 souls, and we still have a rather substantial railway crossing, which unfortunately goes through the middle of town and during rush hour, on many occasions, blocks traffic and creates an even greater gridlock situation. It's hard to complain about that, because of course that is a result of a spur line which goes to Toyota. The reason for the

traffic being blocked are all these wonderful Corollas and Lexus RX 330s that are being shipped throughout North America. It's a nice, warm feeling to see all that product going out and to think about the 3,000 individuals who are employed. However, gridlock is a problem, and this bill unfortunately provides nothing in the way of funding which might alleviate Cambridge's problem and the problem across this great province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister or one of the other debaters has two minutes in which to respond.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I really want to thank all the members who participated in this discussion. I especially want to thank Dr. Kular and my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Lalonde. They made very strong, convincing and insightful arguments. I'm not sure what Mr. Dunlop was talking about, and Mr. Bisson had no focus.

After carefully listening to the debate, I am convinced that moving forward with this bill is the right thing to do. Over 800 people died on our roads last year and thousands were injured. Ontarians are frustrated by daily gridlock. We need to make our roads safer. We must ease congestion and improve public transit. Public safety is at the heart of this bill. This bill is really all about public safety: safety for our children at school crossings; safety for seniors at crosswalks; safety for road workers; safety for taxi passengers; safety for northern residents driving in harsh winter weather—in short, safety for all Ontarians.

Ontario's transportation system has to be not only safe, but it has to be efficient as well. Some of the members have made arguments to that effect. If passed, the bill would make public transit a real alternative to the car. This bill would encourage carpooling through HOV lanes—my parliamentary assistant talked about that—and allow land to be dedicated for new carpool lots and transit stations during planning. This bill, if passed, would allow police to clear highways faster after a collision on the highway. This would improve safety, ease congestion and keep Ontario's economy moving. I would urge all members on all sides of the House to really support this bill.

1610

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member from Simcoe—Grey.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe—Grey):** I'm a little leery when the Liberals start clapping for me, Mr. Speaker.

Before I get into Bill 169, which my party, the Conservatives, generally agrees with, I want to congratulate Garfield Dunlop, the member from Simcoe North, and his wife, Jane. For the third consecutive year, they won the log-sawing contest this past weekend at the Elmvale Maple Syrup Festival, beating out many large guys like me and municipal people. I didn't do it this year. Jane is a heck of a sawyer.

Given that we had three government members speak—I don't want to offend them, because this bill is not worth losing my soul over, but you wouldn't know what this bill was. So I'm going to read—if people are at

home, don't go to your fridge; this omnibus safety bill will be riveting. I've got to read, for the people at home, what this bill does. This may take a few minutes.

In general summary, the bill will increase penalties for cars that ignore pedestrian crossings—the minister did mention that; double speeding fines in construction zones to better protect highway construction workers; enforce high-occupancy vehicle lanes to encourage carpooling and transit use; give police more power to clear accidents and spills faster. Police will be given powers to remove vehicles and debris from the roadway. These new powers will be clarified under the bill, and there will also be provisions to protect the police, the province and municipalities from liability in these circumstances.

The bill will create new offences for flying vehicle parts that can cause serious injury or death to other highway users and improve daily commercial vehicle inspection standards by requiring truck drivers to check for more than 70 itemized defects daily, up from the 23 itemized defects they have to check for now. It will allow for the use of studded tires on vehicles in northern Ontario, allow land to be dedicated for new carpool lots and transit stations during municipal and provincial planning stages, and improve transit commute times by allowing transit vehicles to pre-empt traffic signals, to lengthen a green light or change a red light to green sooner.

It creates an offence to punish scoopers, that is, illegal taxis that pick up passengers from Pearson International Airport. Unfortunately, unscrupulous operators have been known to charge unsuspecting passengers, many of them tourists, as much as \$180 for a trip to downtown Toronto. The minister has pointed that out in some of his speeches in the past. Under the new law, the driver, the person who arranges the ride and the taxi owner could be fined anywhere from \$300 to \$20,000. Failure to pay could result in licence suspension and plate denial at renewal time.

The final purpose of the bill is to make Ontario roads more transit-friendly by increasing the viability of carpooling etc.

I think the best summary I have seen on Bill 169 comes from the Ontario Trucking Association. It's a bit lengthy. At the beginning, though, I want to thank Rebecka Torn and Doug Switzer. Doug is a long-time friend of mine. He was an assistant to Elizabeth Witmer for many years. He and I were assistants here many years ago in the 1980s, before I was elected in 1990. He's a good guy, a very bright guy. He and Rebecka have done a great summary, and I'm going to read that into the record. It's dated February 22, 2005.

**"Transportation Minister Introduces Omnibus Safety Bill**

**"On Monday, February 21, Ontario's Minister of Transportation, Harinder Takhar, commenced his first major legislative initiative when he introduced an omnibus safety bill (Bill 169, the Transit and Road Safety Act) for first reading in the Legislature.**

**"The bill contains over 25 measures aimed at improving road safety. While many of the measures have no**



direct impact on the trucking industry, there are a number that do. While OTA was generally aware of what some of the proposed measures were prior to introduction of the draft legislation, it has spent the last couple of days reviewing the bill in order to better understand the potential implications for trucking. There are a host of issues which have arisen that will require direction from the OTA board before the association can comment in detail, but the following is a summary of the major elements that will be of interest to the trucking industry and to OTA's preliminary commentary:

"Speeding: A major focus of Bill 169 is addressing the problem of speeding. The following measures are proposed:

"—Permitting municipalities to limit speed to 30 km/hr in traffic calming zones.

"—Allowing the MTO to use variable speed limits on highways where the speed limit can be changed using electronic speed limit signs to reflect changes in highway conditions.

"—Increases the fines for those traveling over 30 km/hr.

"—Increases suspensions for those convicted for second and third offences for traveling greater than 50 km/hr over the posted limit.

"—Allow reduced speeds in construction zones and increases fines for speeding in construction zones."

The OTA goes on to say, "While these measures are positive steps as far as they go and represent at least a symbolic effort to reduce speeding in Ontario, it is important to note that there are no new commitments to expanding enforcement of speed limits."

That's something I mentioned at first reading of this bill in February: Where are the 1,000 police officers the McGuinty government promised before the last election and have yet to deliver on, to make sure that any new traffic laws they bring in are actually enforced?

Anyway, the OTA goes on to say, "Increased fines and penalties are only as effective as the speeder's perceived risk of being caught, and without additional enforcement it is unlikely that these measures alone will have significant impact on driver behaviour." These guys ought to know; they represent thousands of truckers across the province who are on our roads every day.

Under the heading "Flying Vehicle Parts," the OTA says:

"Section 84 of the Highway Traffic Act is being amended to make it an offence for any part of any vehicle (including commercial vehicles, automobiles, mobile cranes and any road building machine) to become detached. At the present time, the only similar offence is restricted to wheels that become detached from commercial vehicles. This will be an offence for the driver of the vehicle, and for first time it will make the person doing repairs as well as the repair shop liable if it caused the part to become detached. The fines for an offence involving a commercial vehicle, mobile crane and road building machinery will range from \$400 to \$20,000. In large part, this measure is in response to last year's fatal"

accident "where a car driver was killed after a piece of a sand shoe from a truck crashed through his car's windshield. Two of OTA's chief concerns with this approach are addressed in the bill: (1) the law should allow due diligence defences (in other words, the offences should be matters of strict liability as opposed to absolute liability, as is the case with wheel-offs); and (2) the law should apply to all vehicles including cars, not just trucks. The Minister of Transportation's bill includes both of these measures. This may be good news as far as wheel-offs go because the police will have a lot more alternatives to charge whoever is actually responsible. It could result in a reduction in activity relating to the absolute liability sections for carriers."

This bill will also help the situation where a major piece of drive shaft fell off and went through a lady's window just a few weeks ago in Ontario. It was in the media. At that time the OPP couldn't find anybody to charge. Perhaps this bill will help. She was almost killed.

Under the heading "Wheel-offs," it says,

"The bill includes an amendment that provides a more comprehensive description of the wheel components that are captured within the existing absolute liability provisions. It now includes any 'major component of a wheel, such as a wheel rim or a wheel assembly, and a large piece of a wheel or of a major component of a wheel, but does not include a tire or large piece of a tire.' This closes the loophole for some of the other parts that could detach but aren't actually wheels. It also signals clearly that the government, no doubt buoyed by recent court decisions, remains committed to the absolute liability offence for wheel-offs."

Under the heading "Removal of Vehicles, Debris Blocking Highways":

"In an attempt to speed up the cleanup following a highway accident, the HTA is being amended to give sweeping powers to police officers at the scene, including the power to order the removal and storage of a vehicle, its cargo and debris without the consent of the owner of the vehicle and its cargo, or the insurer of the vehicle and cargo, and no action can be brought against the officer for his"—it should say "his or her"—"actions provided he acted in good faith. The costs of the removal and storage will be the responsibility of the owner, operator and driver of the vehicle, which may eliminate much of the argument at the scene of the accident about liability and responsibility to pay the service providers, usually towing companies and their sub-contractors. A long-standing complaint from the towing industry or at least those involved in recovery operations, is that not infrequently they have to wait a significant time to receive payment for their services—all other parties assisting at the scene receive payment directly from government sources. One of the OTA's long-standing complaints about the time it takes to clean up after an accident is that it is not clear which agency is in charge. The bill attempts to address that—at least in part. However, there are significant cost and liability issues that need to be considered. OTA is currently discussing this issue and

the implications of the proposed change with the insurance industry, since it has been suggested that a change in the insurance regulations may be required. OTA is concerned that where more than one vehicle is involved in an accident, the party who is perceived to have the deepest pockets—usually the trucking company—will be stuck with the bill. Presumably the carrier will be able to take civil action to recover its costs, but whether this is fair needs further examination.

1620

“Trip Inspection: Section 103 of the HTA has been completely rewritten to facilitate adoption of the revised NSC trip inspection standard. The changes are consistent with the requirements that were successfully piloted by several OTA member carriers in 2000. The changes allow for revised daily inspection requirements as well as under vehicle inspections. There is also an allowance for continued operation of a vehicle with certain minor defects. These changes will not come into effect until the supporting regulatory changes are drafted, which could take another year. However, OTA is pleased to see this issue (which was first discussed back in the target ‘97 process) finally moving forward.

“HOV lanes: The bill would allow the minister to designate any lane on a highway as a high-occupancy vehicle ... lane, the use of which will be limited to vehicles carrying a specified number of occupants. This will be determined later in the regulations. In most other jurisdictions the limit is a minimum of two people in the vehicle. The HOV lanes can be either existing lanes on highways or newly constructed lanes specifically created to be HOV lanes.” I’ll just note that the government is adding HOV lanes in part to the 404, the extension of the Don Valley Parkway, right now. “In the past, MTO has indicated that its intent is to generally create new lanes to serve as HOV lanes rather than take away existing lanes. While this measure is designed to reduce traffic congestion on the highways by encouraging more carpooling, the loss of existing lanes could in fact lead to more congestion on the regular lanes, impeding the movement of trucks. OTA will be actively urging the ministry to apply this new power only to new lanes.

“Driver education: The Ontario government has been struggling to bring order to the class G driver education industry for some time. The bill would give MTO sweeping powers to license and regulate driving schools, including course content, and instructors. While initially aimed at the car driver training industry, the powers contained in the bill can, by regulation, be applied to any type of driver training, including commercial driver training. Given ongoing concerns over the state of commercial driver training, the ministry could use these powers to establish a licensing regime for the commercial driver training schools and instructors. The exact form and nature of this regulatory regime would have to be debated and discussed. OTA will follow this process closely to ensure that carriers’ interests are protected in whatever regulatory regime may be developed.”

Finally, the last section that the OTA deals with is under the heading of “Pilot Projects”:

“The bill proposes to add a section to the HTA to allow MTO to conduct research and testing in pilot projects involving vehicles or operations inconsistent with existing HTA requirements. This could be beneficial to OTA as it gives the ministry more flexibility to deal with innovative suggestions without having to go back through the legislative process.”

I want to again thank Doug Switzer and Rebecka Torn for those comments—an excellent overview.

There are some other things I should mention. Anybody watching, you should know this now because, when this bill does become law, you have to make sure that the crosswalk or school crossing is totally cleared before you go through it. A lot of people—I watch crosswalks and crossings every day on Bay Street and Avenue Road—start through when the pedestrian has cleared the front of their car. The new law will require making sure that the pedestrians are fully on the sidewalks or on the sides of the road. Anyway, clear the crossing before you proceed through. I think that’s a good thing. I had a friend killed, a good priest friend from St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto, in the mid 1980s on Avenue Road for exactly that reason. Someone didn’t wait until he cleared the intersection before they proceeded forward and they ran him over and killed him.

The Driving School Association of Ontario has some critical commentary on Bill 169. First of all, they want the minister to know that he has not consulted with the Driving School Association of Ontario. John Svensson is the president of the Driving School Association of Ontario, and he makes the following critical commentary about Bill 169: It “fundamentally kills 20 years of hard work, innovation and investment in self-regulation of the driving school industry initiated under the Peterson government.” Another point he makes is that the bill “will not bring the standards up but rather bring the industry down to the lowest common denominator.” He says that it “gives the government the right to enter driving school property without a warrant.”

We have to be careful because there are hundreds of bills. I remember one time I served in committee when I was last in opposition somewhere between 1990 and 1995 and I was astounded to see how many bills—hundreds—in which government or their agents can enter your property without a warrant. This bill is another case. You can go into a driving school. Why you would need to go into a driving school without a warrant is beyond me. Is somebody bleeding or is there a crisis on the premises? I doubt it. You probably could go get a warrant and have probable cause, but I’ve given up this argument over the years when lawyers get hold of these bills; they always put this in every bill.

John goes on to say that the “government gains the right to remove any equipment, documents or vehicles” from driving schools. He goes on to say that there is a “right to waive new requirements in Bill 169 for special interests, such as school boards who operate driving schools.” Finally, he says, “If a driving school owner sells his or her business, the business licence becomes non-transferable, devaluing their businesses.”



I would urge Minister Takhar to meet with John Svensson. We certainly meet with him regularly in my office. He has put an awful lot of his life, and time and effort, into trying to improve driving schools across the province. He spends his own time, his own money, and he is really a great advocate. I know it's been a controversial area for each government in Ontario, but John is worth listening to, and the minister should do that. In fact, I'm surprised he hasn't. Usually one of the first people every Minister of Transportation meets when they get the portfolio is John Svensson.

I don't have a lot of great problems with the bill, so I'm going to move on and just talk about some other issues. First of all, the minister mentioned in his remarks, as did a couple of other government members, the gas tax. I just want to quickly read from a letter of March 31, 2004, about the gas tax. It is over a year old; it's from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and nothing has changed. Under the heading of "Gas tax," they say, "According to the 2001 annual report of the Provincial Auditor of Ontario, the ministry collected over \$2 billion in gasoline tax and \$643 million in diesel fuel tax in 2000-01. The revenue from these taxes was to be used for the maintenance and expansion of our national highways. Instead, this source of revenue has been put into general revenue accounts. Government should establish some very clear and objective guidelines to the allocation of revenues from existing fuel taxes."

It's a lot of money, and that's the only reason I used that letter. With SARS and that, we have seen the amount of gas tax collected by governments go up and down but it's about \$2 billion and, as I said, another \$643 million in diesel. The fact of the matter is, the McGuinty Liberals brag about fulfilling a commitment that they made to transfer—first of all, in the last election, in the seven all-candidates meetings we had in my riding, the promise from Mark Redmond, the Liberal candidate, was very clear on behalf of the Liberal Party of Ontario—and I think it was repeated at every all-candidates meeting across the province—that all municipalities were going to get a share of the gas tax. Then, after they get elected, we find out that only those municipalities with a transit system will actually get gas tax. So of all the municipalities in my riding, only one sees anything, and it's a little trickle of money. That's the town of Collingwood, I believe—Collingwood for sure. You have to go to Owen Sound, which isn't in my riding; it's in Mr. Murdoch's riding. So just Collingwood, in my riding, receives anything from the gas tax.

1630

Municipal politicians were really after me when I was in government, and they were really after me in these all-candidates meetings and during the last election to get our government—because I was fourth in charge of this from 1995 to the time we left government—to change its mind and say we would give the gas tax to municipalities. Ernie Eves and Mike Harris used to say, "Well, its two billion bucks. You'll have to find that money otherwise, because right now 47% of every revenue

dollar collected by the government goes into health care." I think that under the Liberals it's going to be higher. You can't help it; there are constant lineups in our health care system.

The Liberals decided that they were going to give it to all municipalities. After the election, that promise got broken, and it's now just those municipalities with transit systems. It's been of almost no help to rural and small-town Ontario. Even if you give money to places like Collingwood, we then find out that in Toronto they have any gas tax money clawed back from one-time grants—which were every year—they would get from Queen's Park to run the TTC. So they're really no further ahead.

Finally, when the minister spoke on this bill a few minutes ago, he indicated that the money had already flowed to municipalities. I'm not aware of municipalities getting the cheques yet. I'm not aware of the federal government giving their gas tax to municipalities. I don't think anyone's actually seen one red penny of that. Martin's using it as his lever to try to get the opposition parties not to force a federal election. He's saying, "You won't get your gas tax. You won't get a bunch of other things. You won't get your new immigration rules. You won't get all kinds of things. You won't get your corporate tax cuts." One of them I heard this morning on the radio very clearly: "You won't get your gas tax."

The money hasn't even flowed, so I wouldn't get up here and brag about it until somebody actually sees that money. If it's like most other promises, we may not see anything.

I have the most amusing three letters I've ever received in my 15 years, and they're to do with Highway 26 realignment, my favourite topic in this House, if it's not the lights in front of the Nottawasaga Inn in Alliston before somebody gets killed—and the minister did come up a couple of months ago to see the problem. He saw the 2,000 cars; in fact, his own driver had to wait five minutes according to the New VR, and six minutes according to the CBC that covered it, in order to get on to the highway just to turn right. You should try turning left. You should try turning westbound from the Nottawasaga Inn and the Green Briar development. He experienced it first-hand and wrote a letter back to me after his visit. He wrote one also to Mrs. Donna Jeb, which is dated April 12. My letter is not dated, but I think I got it at about the same time.

For those at home, he's decided that he's not going to put a stoplight at the 10th Side Road and Highway 89. He's not going to put one in front of the Nottawasaga Inn intersection. Instead—I know we're not allowed to use props, but he even sent me a beautiful little coloured map of what he's prepared to do—he's prepared to pave the shoulder on the north side of 89 so that the almost 1,000 senior citizens who live in Green Briar in this area can actually go out on the highway, and they are to sit in the middle of the road. He's going to put nice yellow stripes—it's the snowbelt of Ontario—in the middle of the road. That works like coming out of McDonald's at Avenue Road just south of the 401. It's not going to work when you've got 2,000 cars going in each direction.

You're supposed to pull out of the Inn. If you want to turn left, you'll have to sit in the middle of the road on these beautiful yellow stripes we're going to get and—he even says in the letter—take your chances to get into the traffic. But he's hoping, as he said, that this will at least give drivers the confidence to get their noses out into the traffic.

It's humorous. It's beyond humorous, actually. Someone's going to get killed. Last year, two people did get killed. If you drive by there now, on the bridge area about half a kilometre from the Nottawasaga Inn-89 intersection there are flowers there. They're renewed every few weeks to commemorate the two people, employees of the Nottawasaga Inn, who got wiped out there last year.

Two years ago, in response to that, Frank Klees came up as Minister of Transportation in June 2003 and announced the lights. The government gets in and they say, "We didn't announce the lights. We didn't pay for them." Lo and behold, before they silenced the bureaucrats at the Owen Sound Ministry of Transportation office, one of them told the Alliston Herald—it was in there, and I've quoted it in this House many times—"Yes, we have the money. We have the \$85,000 for the lights." A week later, the McGuinty government shut down the bureaucrats. I phone now and it's, "Sorry, Mr. Wilson, everything goes through the minister's office"—a senior member: 15 years. How do you buggers don't have near that in here? You shut me down, and I can't even talk to my local bureaucrats.

I'm never going to forget it. I think of it every day that I'm on the phone. I phone ministers' offices all the time. You've got the most useless MPP liaisons I've ever seen in my life who have no idea what they're doing. It's horrible.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Go get them, Jim. Don't let up.

**Mr. Wilson:** I don't intend to.

**The Acting Speaker:** I think I understand your point of order, but please go ahead.

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** Mr. Speaker, we have individuals who work both in the bureaucracy and on the political side who are dedicated individuals, and for this honourable member to stand up and demean their hard work I don't think is appropriate. I think he owes those employees an apology.

**The Acting Speaker:** I don't believe that is a point of order. The member is entitled to say what he wishes, so I ask him to continue.

**Mr. Wilson:** Yes; I'll remind you that this place is a substitute for war. In other countries they shoot each other first, then have this debate. We tend to get yelling at each other in here and we leave as friends. So I just say to the minister—

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I do take exception to the honourable

member making a comparison between this House and war.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr. Wilson:** Do you know what the mace is? It's the king's club for war. All the decorations here are war decorations and shields. That's what they're for. That's why you're exempt from the laws of the land during the time you're in here. That's why, when you're a minister, you often say, "Go say it on the steps." The distance between this front row and the government front row is exactly the distance of two men with outstretched swords. Do you not know your parliamentary history? Do you not know what this place represents?

Anyway, I'm not apologizing to anyone. What I would suggest to you is that you allow your senior bureaucrats, who work very hard, to talk to us and not have to filter everything through the minister's office. It's an insult to democracy; it's horrible. I've said it with a straight face, I've raised it in here a dozen times and I'll continue to raise it until I can get through to a director. In fact, the last time I talked to a director was last week, and he said the exact same thing: "Go through the minister's office." So don't tempt me to take a break and go out and use the phone, because I bet that I'm right. I've heard it myself. We all complain about it and it's true.

I just want to ask Mr. Takhar, the Minister of Transportation, to take another look at the Highway 89 Nottawasaga Inn entrance. It's not just the Nottawasaga Inn, which is a fantastic resort in this province where the government has a lot of conferences; it's all of the people who live in Green Briar and Briar Hill and the people in Alliston, because you've got to start to create, east of Alliston, breaks in the traffic so people like my parents, who live behind the bowling alley just off Highway 89, can get out into traffic. My mother told me that one day she waited 20 minutes to turn. A lot of people will turn right and go up and try and do a U-turn and come back. I was trying to come out of Tim Hortons at Cookstown the other day to go eastbound to the 400 and ended up going westbound for a whole concession. The whole detour took at least three and a half to four minutes, a complete inconvenience. I had to turn around and come back just to get over to the 400. It's ridiculous.

In Mr. Takhar's letter, he says that it's only a temporary problem for part of the day. Well, what part of the day doesn't he like? The problem is from 5:30 in the morning till 7:30 at night. I can't believe his road counts are right. In fact, they show 22,000 cars. You'd think that's enough for a light, but apparently not.

I want to go back to Highway 26. This is the most astounding thing I've ever seen. Highway 26: Last summer you guys got in, and they're building this \$33-million highway. It's about 6.7 kilometres, a realignment of Highway 26 between Stayner and Collingwood. I've never seen anything like it in my life. I was notified by the local media one day when they noticed that even the outhouses were being removed; all the construction people had left. This was in the middle of last summer's construction season. You cancelled the project under the



guise of a 10-year review. This isn't a political piece of road. If I wanted to put a political piece of road in, I'd have redone the whole of Highway 26 for hundreds of kilometres.

1640

The fact of the matter is that this is a safety-zone issue. We've had a lot of people killed between Wasaga Beach and Collingwood. Next to Niagara—and some years it beats Niagara; before they had the casino, we were certainly busier than Niagara. It's a four-season tourist area of the province, and we're busy all year around. The Blue Mountain hills are at the other end of this realignment.

This is only phase one; we need phase two and three. Oh, you've cancelled phase one; you've even gone to the expense of putting up a fence with a padlock on the part that had been started under our government. We've got about half of the area cleared and about half of a highway bed put in, but there is about three kilometres where you haven't cleared the bush and you haven't done any of the intersections anywhere. It's astounding, and every time we write about it, every time I bring it up this in this House—at a chamber of commerce event I was at, the Wasaga Beach business awards on Saturday night, the mayor, Cal Patterson, told me that he met with Minister Takhar, the Minister of Transportation, during the ROMA-Good Roads conference. Mr. Takhar said he would talk about certain issues but he wouldn't talk about Bill 26.

**Mr. Marchese:** How come?

**Mr. Wilson:** I don't know. He wouldn't talk about it.

We've got major commercial properties along where this realignment is. All the developers tell the mayor now that they're not going to do anything. Everything is on hold. We've got small businesses, big business, and we are hoping for a big anchor store there. This is the Town of the Blue Mountains area, the gateway to the Blue Mountains, and the fact is that it's on hold.

This wonderful lady—if you think my language is unparliamentary, wait until you hear this one. Marilyn Iva Thomas lives at 96 Constance Boulevard, Wasaga Beach, Ontario. She writes on March 23, 2005, and on March 26 and on March 24. I'll try and read them in chronological order. She's writing Harinder Takhar. I don't know this lady; I've no idea what she looks like. But she's pretty angry.

"Highway 26 realignment between Stayner and Collingwood" is the title of the letter.

"Dearest Taki," she calls the minister; she's got other names for him later.

"Another sunny day has made its appearance. Spring is chomping at the bit to get at my flower gardens. Alas, it's another day of red tape and bewilderment in your camp since I have neither heard from you nor have you deigned to respond to the public's need for action. Are you bound to a certain nondisclosure code? Or the code of non-participation as represented by the red tape?

"The noticeable thing about this man is that neither the hands nor the mouth are bound!" She draws a little

picture of Mr. Takhar. "And that's all you need—a mouth to approve the continuance of realigning the present Suicide Alley and the hands to sign the papers"—in other words, say something about the Highway 26 realignment and sign the papers.

She goes on to say, "I am positive Jim Wilson is a tad chagrined by my freedom of speech. However, rather than appealing to you using fake honeyed words, begging and pleading, bowing and scraping, which are so belittling, especially under the present circumstances, I appeal to your sense of fair play. If you don't have one, I'll gladly loan you mine." I can't tell you what she says after that. I'd better skip that paragraph.

She ends this particular letter of March 23 saying, "Stand up and be counted! Break the bonds that tie! Refuse to be bound by political narrow-mindedness since lives are at stake! Every moment you dawdle could be detrimental to someone's life." That's from Marilyn Iva Thomas. I couldn't have said it better. There is a little picture of Mr. Takhar all bound up in red tape.

On March 24, again the title of the letter is "Highway 26 realignment between Stayner and Collingwood.

"Hari," she says this time, "sleeping on the job does not necessarily mean you're overworked." She's got a picture of a fellow sleeping on a table. "It could mean that you don't sleep well at home because of a guilty conscience and go to work where a guilty conscience is unheard of. To be a politician and claim to have a conscience is the grossest oxymoron...."

She goes on to say, "I invite you to attend this location and see for yourself the death-dealing situation we contend with summer, winter, spring and fall. Bring your armour to slay dragons, and shed the slings and arrows of the outraged populace living here.

"I remain, forever trying to get the job done,

"M.I. Thomas."

She writes to Mr. Takhar again, and copies me, on March 26. Again the title of the letter is "Highway 26 realignment between Stayner and Collingwood."

She says:

"Hari, how much of a line are you feeding Brian Peltier? He seems to think that three phases were planned for the realignment. What happened to the smooth flow of planned phases?

"Jerky, irrational planning does nothing for our confidence that there are, in fact, phases. If phases were properly planned, there would be no unrealistic delays."

I would just say to people at home, she is mentioning the phases because that's one of the excuses we get back from this government. They keep saying, "We're about to enter the next phase." Well, no one seems to know what the next phase is. She goes on to say:

"The traffic is atrocious on local Mosport speedway." That's what she's calling the existing Highway 26 that we're trying to replace.

"It's so strange to have a highly built-up area cut in half by a curvy two-lane highway with the speed limit at 80 kilometres per hour. Tourists (now mainly skiers galore!) and others who cannot read the signs or respect

other drivers ... test our forbearance. We were so excited when the first work was underway and absolutely mystified and left scratching our heads in wonder when the work was halted without warning. Without advising the public of the strategy up front. The constant terminological inexactitudes are very wearying.

"We have too many pre-existing private accesses and public roads presenting hourly hazards to allow the matter to sit gathering mould. Step up to the plate.

"As never before and one day older,

"Marilyn Iva Thomas."

Thank you, Miss Thomas, for your letter. There is a local constituent, unprompted by her MPP, in very strong words expressing disbelief and disappointment, to say the least, in what has happened. I never heard anything of it.

Mrs. Patsy Boyce stopped my constituency assistant, Joy Parks, in Collingwood the other day. "Patsy lives just off Highway 26 and was explaining how difficult it is getting on to 26 to go to work each morning. Many days"—get this, folks—"she waits 10 to 15 minutes to get safely on to the road. She wants to see the work proceed as soon as possible"—that's on the realignment—"but realizes she may have to wait until 2007 when the Conservatives get back into government.

"Lorne Winkler also resides on Highway 26 and also finds it extremely difficult to get safely on to the road. He drops into our office asking about any updates. He is very concerned about the safety of the road, especially with the number of tourists travelling to our region.

"Dale and Julie Parks" I gather they are Joy's in-laws, so there might be a little bit of a conflict of interest, but they are entitled, in a free and democratic society—unlike what some people just expressed here a few minutes ago. You're not allowed to say anything in here any more. "Dale and Julie Parks ... live just off Highway 26 also. Both struggle each morning to gain access to this highway."

It's a safety issue. It's a ridiculous issue. It's one that the Liberal Party will never live down if they don't smarten up soon. Someone will get killed, and I can tell you it will be a sad day for those families, obviously, but also a sad day in Ontario.

This bill, Bill 169, is the first major initiative of this government to deal with transportation. There is nothing in it to solve problems like Highway 26, or Highway 89 east of Alliston. There's nothing in it for gridlock other than—I agree that a lot of this was drafted under our government in terms of getting the wrecks off the road when there is an accident and protecting police officers and emergency personnel from liability and things like that.

Look at the CAA's Mobility Express: "Gridlock." The only reason it's blown up is because my eyes have gone and the original print is too small, so I had to blow it up. But this is their Gridlock report from 2004. It says: "Gridlock, and How CAA Proposes to Reduce it in Toronto." I'll just read from the summary page. It's a 15-year, \$18-billion plan. They recommend that there be some partnerships with the private sector and that we

spend, as a government, about \$1.2 billion a year over the 15 years, for, as I said, a total of \$18 billion. I'll just read from this document, which is available on the CAA's Web site.

"CAA proposes a three-phase implementation plan. Each phase will take about five years to complete, so the entire plan can be implemented within 15 years—a decade before experts predict Toronto's transportation system and road-users will be frozen by total gridlock"—by total gridlock, because it's gridlocked now for all of us trying to get in, out and around Toronto.

#### 1650

I'm surprised there isn't a revolt. I'm surprised there isn't a revolt from drivers every day. It's two hours in the morning to get from one side of the city to the other. It's horrendous. I have to try to come down Avenue Road; it can be an hour itself just coming down Avenue Road. Getting out of here after question period, if I want to get to a dinner or an awards event or something in my riding at 6 o'clock, I have to leave during question period. I have to get out of here at 3 o'clock to get home to Wasaga Beach to be sure I'm there at 6. I don't know how many meetings I have to miss, because sometimes you can be an hour and 15 minutes getting up Avenue Road; sometimes, you can be 40 minutes. With no traffic, it's literally a 20-minute drive.

Then you get on the 401, and that's a parking lot going east or west. Of course, I have to go west. Then I get on the 400, and that's a parking lot usually up to just about Wonderland. It's just ridiculous.

So, Toronto "frozen by total gridlock. Estimated costs are based on costs associated with similar projects such as the Front Street extension, the Howard Franklin Bridge and the Red Hill Creek Expressway."

For the first phase, they recommend a \$5.3-billion—or about \$1.1 billion per year over 15 years—expenditure: "Expand SCOOT installations to all signalized intersections: \$58 million at \$36,000 per intersection.

"Extend the Bloor subway to Square One Plaza in Mississauga via Sherway Gardens....

"Extend the Sheppard subway to Consumers Road....

"Build the Scarborough Highlands expressway to Highway 401 and adjacent transit line from Old Weston Road to the Toronto Zoo....

"Upgrade Black Creek Drive to an expressway....

"Link arterial roads in the downtown core...."

Beside each of these items they give a dollar figure.

The second phase, which would be \$10.2 billion, or about \$2 billion per year:

"Construct the Yonge-Spadina subway loop via York University....

"Finish the Queen Street subway line....

"Build the Richview expressway and adjacent route for the Eglinton subway....

"Extend Allen Road underground to Bathurst Street....

"Link arterial roads in suburban areas....

"Build the Humber Bayway bridge....

"Construct the Gardiner Offshore Extension."



The final stage would be \$2.4 billion, or \$473 million per year for the last few years of this 15-year plan. It says: "Complete the Sheppard subway to Scarborough Town Centre from Consumers Road...."

"Tunnel the Eglinton subway route to Allen Road from Jane Street...."

"Create a city-wide network of cycling paths on their own routes."

The total plan costs the city \$18 billion, or about \$1.2 billion a year.

Given that the gas tax is \$2 billion a year, plus another \$637 million—I believe I said—in diesel tax, the government who said that they would commit this to transportation should meet and deal with the CAA's recommendations. They put a lot of work into it. They've had a task force running for quite a long time, and it's quite a good plan. Anything would help with respect to gridlock.

I want to talk, too, where this bill doesn't, in a sense—Bill 169 touches on the 427 north-south corridor, the 427 extension. As you know now, the 427 ends at York Regional Road 7, which is the old Highway 7. It was to go up through Peel, Brantford, Vaughan, up through my riding, north up to Highway 89. Then, there was a lot of opposition during the last election.

For those listening at home, you may have heard that the ministry has announced that—let's find the announcement here. The 427 corridor north of Highway 89—actually, north of the GTA, so anything north of Highway 9—project has been cancelled. It's not contained in what the government calls its draft growth plan. I'll just read here from April 14, 2005, a letter to me from Linda McAusland, manager, provincial and environmental planning office for the people back home.

"Dear Mr. Wilson:

"Re: 427 Transportation Corridor Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference

"The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) is working to provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within the context of the province's draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

"In February 2005, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Renewal released a draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. The draft growth plan outlines a strategy for managing growth and development in the greater Golden Horseshoe over the next 30 years. As part of the policies in the draft growth plan, improving access to intermodal facilities is identified as a priority for improved goods movement, and the link between the current terminus of Hwy 427 and the CP intermodal yard in Vaughan is specifically identified."

The important line for my constituents is: "The GTA north transportation corridor across and north of the Oak Ridges moraine is not identified as an initiative in the draft growth plan and is no longer an active project."

In other words, what they are going to do in this EA—and I agree with them—is deal with the intermodal facilities; that is, the truck-train transfer yard just off Highway 50. It would have been parallel to where the

427 would have extended north of old Highway 7, or Regional Road 7 as it's now called. Because they have not asked for an EA on anything north of the GTA for at least the next 10 or 15 years, the government is saying it will not look at wiping out the village of Ivy, the village of Utopia in my riding and some of the best farmland in Ontario.

Now, it wasn't the Liberals' fault at all, and it really wasn't our fault; in fact, the first I heard of this plan—the 427 north to Barrie, and then a bypass around Barrie—was when the Ministry of Transportation under our government started holding open houses. I think the second open house went by when I started to get calls from my constituents saying they were going to drive a new four-lane highway right up through the east part of my riding. As a cabinet minister, I asked my colleague the Minister of Transportation to cancel any further open houses, which we did in 2003, to try to quash this thing.

I'm glad the Liberals now have said they're not interested, because here's the thing: The minister's own House note on Highway 400 from Toronto to Barrie indicates that we should have 20 lanes of highway. I've indicated that I've been waiting all my life, or at least 30 years, for some government to come along—the existing six lanes from, say, Wonderland north, actually King Side Road north, can be expanded to as much as 20 lanes. You've got a bottleneck at the Dunlop Street and Bayfield Street bridges in Barrie, so you'll probably have to do a Barrie bypass.

But finally the government, and I give them good credit for this—finally the planners have said, "Don't listen to politicians," because I've said, "Over my dead body are you extending the 427 through my riding; you may want to extend it up to 9, because it looks like Vaughan is quite interested in it." But the fact of the matter is, those at home know this 427 extension would be only a few kilometres west of the current 400. So the 400 should be 20 lanes. It should be at least 12. I think that's reasonable.

**Mr. Marchese:** Jim, 20 lanes?

**Mr. Wilson:** Well, you've got an EA already done. According to the House note, you have the widening from Highway 9, at the beginning of my riding, to Highway 89, in the middle of my riding, right where I was talking about Nottawasaga, from six to eight lanes and ultimately 10 lanes, awaiting the Minister of the Environment's decision. This is the government's own House note. You can do that right away, Rosie. Why upset everybody with a new piece of Highway 427 through prime agricultural land when you've already got environment approval? Part of this note says you have it and part of it says you're waiting for environmental approval. The EAs have been done—I guess that's the point—and the minister has to sign off on final approval. But the environmental assessments have been done. We've been waiting years for the highway to be expanded. It already is 12 lanes at the south end. The part my colleagues from Toronto are wondering about already is 12 lanes up to about Highway 407, plus the off-ramps and everything. You need to continue that right up to Barrie.

1700

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** The transit tax credit.

**Mr. Wilson:** I'll get to that. I'm covering everything I know on transportation here at the moment, I say to Mr. O'Toole.

I'll just read this note for people back home, because this is a major highway. Forty thousand cars come out of my riding and Joe Tascona's riding every day. They come down this highway, only to be stopped at Highway 9, where the traffic backs up as you get into Toronto. It's killing family life. As I said earlier, there are about two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon; that's four hours of your day just sitting in gridlock. Yet we have governments and planners in the Ministry of Transportation who want to spend all kinds of new money building a Highway 427 in my riding which isn't necessary.

If I ever ask this question of what the minister's going to do about the increasing commuter and weekend traffic on Highway 400, the minister's suggested response, according to the briefing note, is:

"This important commuter and economic route currently handles about 176,000 vehicles a day at its busiest section.

"The ministry is planning to improve Highway 400 between Toronto and Barrie to expand capacity and enhance safety." By the way, this is relevant to Bill 169 because some of the authority for the planning that has to be done for this highway is contained in the bill.

"MTO has recently completed three environmental study reports for improvements to Highway 400 from Major Mackenzie Drive to Barrie, including:

"Widening from Major Mackenzie Drive to Highway 9 from the current six lanes to an interim eight lanes and ultimately 10 lanes." You could go further, but they've asked for environmental approval and received it for up to 10 lanes.

"Widening from Highway 9 to Highway 89 from six to eight lanes and ultimately 10 lanes," as I said before, is awaiting the Minister of the Environment's decision.

The environmental studies also got approval for "widening from Highway 89 to Highway 11 ... MTO is finalizing additional information for consideration" by the Ministry of the Environment on that particular point.

"The ministry will be initiating a Highway 400 high-occupancy vehicle ... planning study to determine the opportunity and feasibility of providing HOV lanes on Highway 400 from Toronto to Barrie." Remember what the truckers' association said? Any HOV lanes should be new lanes. Don't take away one of the six lanes we have now to make it a high-occupancy vehicle lane, which would mean only two people per vehicle. A vehicle with two or more people could use that lane; the rest of us would be stuck with the lanes that were left over. It goes on to say what HOV lanes are.

"Facts:

"Highway 400 from Major Mackenzie Drive to Highway 11 is a six-lane rural freeway." Its traffic count is 75,000; I guess that's a daily count.

"Highway 400 from Steeles Avenue to Major Mackenzie Drive is an eight-lane rural freeway." Its daily traffic count is 118,000.

"Highway 400 from Highway 401 to Steeles Avenue is a 10-lane rural freeway." Its daily traffic count is 176,000. That comes back to the earlier comment at the beginning of this note saying that peak parts of Highway 400 have 176,000 vehicles a day.

"The highway serves as both a vital economic and commuter route and also as a recreational corridor." We all know that.

"The highway experiences heavy travel during week-day commuting periods and significant congestion on summer weekends."

If the government is so inclined, you may have to borrow some money from the private sector, but you really should get moving on the 400. I'm glad that the 427 isn't on the radar right now, although you should do what you're planning on doing, according to this new environmental assessment: Deal with the CP Rail yard and deal with the intersection of Highway 7, which is now York regional road 7, and Highway 50. Apparently, it's over capacity, by the government's own notes. The assessment will look at that. You can't put any more turning lanes in or anything; you're going to have to do something there. You may want to parallel Highway 50 with the 427 extension to the edge of the GTA, up to Highway 9.

If you've got that done, you'll be doing more than any other government has done in that area in decades. Other than that—a couple of lanes here, one lane here and one lane there, on each side—that whole area, for commuters, especially those who are trying to come down from the airport in my riding, is badly congested and needs help. But don't bother spending the \$1 billion building the 427 right up to Barrie. I don't think you'd end up getting environmental approval anyway.

They talk about the gas tax going to some municipalities. The minister said that in his comments—so it's a fair comment for debate—today about Bill 169.

I did a question last week in the House about this new municipal partnership fund, which is turning out not to be much of a partnership at all. It's replacing the former community reinvestment fund that was established by our government to deal with local roads, police, land ambulances, social services etc. As I mentioned last week, Owen Sound is going to lose \$2 million. It gets a little bit of money—I forget the exact amount, to be fair, but it's just a little bit of money; it might be \$100,000 or less—for transit, but they're going to take back \$2 million. Property taxes, the treasurer tells us, will eventually go up by 12.5% because of the McGuinty government's new funding.

The Town of the Blue Mountains will see a decrease of \$1.3 million; property taxes will go up 17% because of the government's new funding formula. The municipality of Grey Highlands loses \$1 million; property taxes could go up—the treasurer says "will go up"—a whopping 25%. That's from the treasurers you met last week in



Grey county. They report on three of those municipalities. Twenty-five per cent is unbelievable; 17% is unbelievable; 12.5% is unbelievable. The municipalities and property taxpayers were angry when we caused property taxes to go up 4% or 5% in the worst cases. Under their new formula, which they're bragging about in question period—and John Tory, the leader of my party, has been asking about it every day; I asked about it last week for these Grey county municipalities.

Anyway, I just want to read: "New Provincial Grant Hurts Grey Highlands." I represent Grey Highlands.

"A recent change in provincial grants for municipalities will cost taxpayers in Grey Highlands almost a million dollars annually, and that will translate into large tax increases starting in 2006." This press release was written and distributed on April 7, 2005.

"Last Friday, the municipalities across the province received details of a new grant called the Ontario municipal partnership fund.... The 2004 provincial grant, called the community reinvestment fund ... was \$1.97 million for the municipality of Grey Highlands.

"This year's OMPF grant"—the municipal partnership fund grant—"is the same amount but it includes a one-time payment of \$202,032 for this year only and \$663,821 that will be phased out beginning in 2006. Next year, \$50,880 will be lost; in 2007, a further \$76,320 will be lost; and in 2008, a further \$127,200 will be lost. With no information beyond that, Grey Highlands officials are hoping that the balance of \$409,421 is not lost all at once, in 2009."

I'm just going by the government's charts, which are available on the Ministry of Finance Web site. In fact, they're here somewhere; I had them printed out again this afternoon.

It continues: "The former CRF"—community reinvestment fund grant—"was initiated in 1998 to help municipalities pay for costs downloaded from the province, such as police. The new grant has six components, some of which do not apply to Grey Highlands."

This is the real kicker, I think. Under the title of "rural community" in this press release from Grey Highlands, it says: "Grey Highlands is recognized for being a rural community and receives \$150 per household. With its 5,088 households, Grey Highlands will receive a grant of \$763,200. Other similar-sized municipalities received similar grants in this category"—West Grey and Meaford, it goes on to say.

The final kicker, though, is under "Rural stabilization.

"Because the new grant for Grey Highlands would be smaller than the previous grant, it receives \$278,098 in this category," and then assessment equalization, farm and forest equalization, police services and rural social programs. The final kicker, the point that I was trying to make here, I guess, is that it's going to cause a huge property tax increase. For the purposes of most of the categories in this new municipal partnership grant, Grey Highlands, which is probably one of the most rural municipalities of any riding in Ontario, is no longer considered a rural municipality for most parts of this grant.

I don't have it with me, but the local newspaper had a headline saying, "Grey Highlands No Longer Considered Agricultural; Loses Agricultural Designation." That was a shock to everyone back home.

In conclusion, I generally agree with Bill 169. I can't believe that the minister would spend exactly nine and a half minutes on his largest initiative to date. There have been almost no government announcements, that I'm aware of; almost no tenders put out at all on transportation. I don't know what major projects they're doing this summer as we enter the construction season, because they're doing very few. There's no bold transportation plan for the province. I haven't even talked about the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association, which has sent me all kinds of stuff about there being no transportation plan for the greenbelt area. I'd like you to look at these local issues before someone gets killed. Whether I'm in opposition or in government, it's ridiculous for you to come in and cancel projects in my riding that are safety issues, and I'd ask the government to consider that. We are generally supportive of Bill 169, except for my last hour of comments.

1710

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Marchese:** I just want to say that I agree with some of the things the member from Simcoe—Grey talked about. The fact that this is a place of war is true; it is war in this place. The government is over there—with a rump here that needs another place—and the opposition is here. It's war. This is not a friendly place where we're all working together. Every government comes in and says, "We should work together." You couldn't have found a bunch of Liberals, who are now in cabinet, who were more violent, vitriolic and ready for war each and every day against the Conservative government. You had the Conservative government on the other side saying, "Come on, let's be friends. Let's work things out." Everyone who gets over there wants to be friends with the people over here. But everyone who is in opposition, including Papatello, who I like in many ways—

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** Hey, I'm non-violent.

**Mr. Marchese:** She's non-violent now, but, boy, you should've seen her when she was in opposition. It was a state of siege each and every day. So I'm with the member: This is a place of war.

I've got to disagree with him on the whole issue of creating 20 lanes on the 400. I've got to tell you, 20 lanes: Can you just picture that? I can see for miles and miles. That's a lot of lanes. I would prefer to go a different way: the James Bond movie, *You Only Live Twice*; the good doctor mentioned that to me. I was thinking of those little jets you can put on your back and press some little button and just take off. I prefer that than to have 20 lanes on the 400. I've got to tell you, Jim, I'm not in agreement with that. But maybe you might agree with me on those little gizmos, where you can just take off. We'd create so much space.

I wonder what you think about the fact that the Liberals were going to hire 1,000 cops and we don't have them yet. You might have an opinion on that as well, and I'd be interested to hear that.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I listened with great interest to the speech from the member from Simcoe-Grey, and I noted his general support for Bill 169. I think I was disappointed, as most members were in the House, that although he supported Bill 169, he ended up devoting three quarters of his speech to other subjects. I think once in a while the opposition has to come clean. When the government comes through with a piece of legislation that is going to increase safety, that is going to increase the environment, that is going to bring an end to gridlock, which is causing so many economic problems, I think it is time for the opposition not to stand up to say, "Yes, it's a good bill," and then go off on tirades.

In terms of those tirades, I must say that I was particularly disturbed by a series of letters by one Mrs. Thomas, written to the member. The reason why is, first of all, I want to go on the record that our Minister of Transportation is a fine, upstanding minister. He's a man of integrity; he's an individual who has a vision for the transportation system in this province. To stand up and read letters which begin by making fun of the minister's name, I find particularly questionable. I think, instead, it would have behooved the member to stand up and go into the bill in greater detail, to use his hour to talk about a piece of legislation which is forward-looking and, as I say, will have an effect on some of the major issues that are facing our province in terms of transportation and gridlock.

I just look at some of the quotes that have come out about this bill. One from officer Cam Woolley, an OPP sergeant, who told the Toronto Sun, "The police have been waiting for such legislation for a long time. It's in the public interest to do this. It's going to save lives and improve the quality of life and the economy."

Dave Woodford, another OPP constable: "[The bill] gives us more authority. Our main job is getting the highway open again."

This is a good piece of legislation, and it's about time that the opposition stood up and supported it.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I'm disappointed only in the fact that I have very little time to compliment the member from Simcoe-Grey for outstanding comments on Bill 169. As our critic on transportation, he's very well informed. I'm somewhat disappointed, however, that he didn't take more time to speak on a bill that I'm very familiar with, which is Bill 137, the tax credit for commuters. That's before the estimates committee, and I can assure you what it's aimed at doing in particular is that the commuters who are frustrated with the gridlock now have a choice of taking public transit. When they do, their expenditures for the use of public transit would become a tax deduction, a credit. I urge members of all parties to support Bill 137, which will be going to the estimates committee, and I urge viewers today to write to me or send me an e-mail, for that matter, and I can assure you that your comments will be heard.

This bill, as the member from Simcoe-Grey has said, is pretty much in agreement with many of the things we were doing as government. Everyone is frustrated with gridlock, and I would only say what I see here, and I want the Liberals in presence here today to recognize that one of the things they're doing is doubling the fine. They're increasing taxes again. Everywhere I look, they're increasing taxes, and they're barriers on the people of Ontario. In fact, Doug Switzer, of the Ontario Trucking Association, said that they don't have a problem with the legislation, that it doesn't place an unfair burden on the guy with the deep pockets on the other side of the road. So they are just as cynical and suspicious of the minister. But these are much-needed issues, and in my riding of Durham we want the 401 interchanges completed, the 407 extension completed and improvements in GO Transit service in support for Bill 137.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** It is really, really humorous to hear a Liberal member in this Legislature come forward and say, "Pass this bill on a wink and a nod." You know, this bill doesn't really deal with gridlock too much; HOV lanes, yes. But talk about parliamentary gridlock. Go back to the last Parliament, and the Liberals of the day did nothing but slow this Parliament down as much as they possibly could. We would debate bills which they would vote unanimously in favour of. We would debate three, four, five days of legislative time when they had nothing to say about the piece of legislation. Fortunately with our new leadership, with John Tory, Mr. Tory wants to make this place work properly. So you will find a responsible opposition in this Legislature, and that's what you have at this present time. On some occasions we have given the government bills in one or two days.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Sterling:** The member from Windsor Centre cannot be in this Legislature without interrupting.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Windsor West.

**Mr. Sterling:** Windsor West. Whether she's in the opposition or on the government side, it doesn't really matter that much with regard to her interjections anyway. They don't make any sense. We are going to try to pass this bill in a timely manner but we require time to debate it. We won't stall like the formal Liberals did when they were in opposition.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Simcoe-Grey has two minutes in which to respond.

**Mr. Wilson:** I appreciate the comments, good and bad, from colleagues around the House. On a positive note, although I don't know it should be positive—some Liberal member here objected at the beginning of my remarks to me calling this place a substitute for war. The first time I was ever called a liar in my public life was by the Minister of Social Services, the member from Windsor West. Before I even got to the radio station in Windsor, when I announced the new cancer centre down there as Minister of Health back in about 1996, she'd already called me a liar three times on a live radio show. You walk into the studio and it is like, "You're a liar"—



the little girl who was the DJ. "You're a liar." And I'm like, "What do you mean I'm a liar?" You called me a liar, you and George Smitherman—

**The Acting Speaker:** Excuse me. Hold on. I don't think I've ever run into this before, where someone refers to himself using that word, but you've used it over and over and now you're purporting to use it for other people. So I would ask you to cease and desist.

1720

**Mr. Wilson:** I'm not bitter about the whole thing, but it was horrible. That was the beginning, in my time, of seeing this place go downhill. You're the rat pack over there, folks. You seem to think you're sinless. This place went from, "We used to have a beer or a hot coffee together after work," to "No one talks to anyone any more." How did that start during the time I was here? A rat pack. They used to call us names. They were rude; they were incredible. Don't tell me this isn't a substitute for war. You guys were doing war long before I even knew it.

Anyway, I'm going to say something nice about the government. Hold on; you'll hear a pin drop. I want to thank the government. Although only two municipalities in my riding got anything under the Canada-Ontario infrastructure, I want to thank them for a little bit of money for the rural hall's water supply in Clearview township, and Springwater township is getting rehabilitation of the Finlay Mill Road bridge. I want to thank you for that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Bisson:** That was a very interesting ruling and a very interesting two minutes. I want to say my friend is not bitter. I do know that for sure.

I've got a whole bunch of things that I want to put on the record in this particular debate.

**Mr. Marchese:** Take your time. Don't go fast.

**Mr. Bisson:** I'm not going to go fast. I'll take my time, as my good friend the member from Trinity-Spadina has pointed out. I've got a whole hour, so I'm going to have a chance to put some of this stuff on the record.

Let me say from the outset that there is much in this bill that we support—no question. I would see this as a bit of an omnibus bill in transportation. There are a number of things in here that we support, and we're going to go through some of those a little bit later. But there are a few things that I have some difficulty with.

I'm sure the government is going to be interested in referring this bill to committee in the summer recess, and we're going to have an opportunity to deal with a couple of amendments that I don't think the government would be totally opposed to.

I want to raise one directly, right off the top of the debate, and that is a concern that's been brought to me by a number of people who do recovery at accident scenes: tow truck drivers and specifically the guys who come in. For example, a large logging truck or transport truck or fuel truck or something has been involved in a motor vehicle accident and it goes off into the ditch and has to

be recovered. It has to be taken off the highway, because the highway has been blocked and closed. They call in these specialty operators, such as D. and L. Towing and other people in my riding and across this province. They are there, ordered by the police, who say, "There is something in the middle of the road. We need you to take that transport truck, clear it off the middle of the road, so we can reopen Highway 11 or 17"—or whatever it might be—"so people can get access."

One of the difficulties we have with this particular bill is under subsections 134.1(1) and (4). There's a section in here that, rightfully, tries to create an amendment that basically says that police officers, acting in good faith, who are doing their jobs, who are trying to deal with the scene of an accident and at the same time do an investigation and get the highway open, will not be held liable for damages as a result of carrying out their duties in reopening the highway.

There are all kinds of examples where that could happen. For example, a large logging truck has been involved in a motor vehicle accident. Let's say the logging truck has turned over in the ditch and there are logs across the highway. The police officer says, "Clear that area out because we need to get the traffic through after we've done our investigation," and for some reason there is more damage done to the vehicle in doing the quick removal of the logs and stuff off of the highway. Or there is some other damage to another vehicle or property or something near the accident scene.

This particular amendment under section 134—we understand it and we support the general direction the government is going—says that we're not going to hold the police officer at the scene who ordered the cleanup liable by way of a lawsuit because other damages or other liabilities may have been created by right of the actions he or she has taken as a police officer. We generally support that amendment. However, we've got a problem, because the police officer who is now protected by way of this legislation says, "OK, Jonathan"—let's say that my friend Jonathan, the page from Cambridge, is the person arriving on the scene and is the one who is supposed to remove that particular transport truck or trailer. He could be held responsible by the courts for any damage that is done to the vehicle that's being withdrawn or any other damages that might occur as a result of being ordered by a police officer. One of the amendments we would like to put forward in committee would extend the right of protection from liability to those people who have been ordered by the police to do the actual clearing of the highway or the municipal road or whatever it might be.

I want to put on the record a letter I have, dated March 3, from Riopelle Griener, the lawyers representing this particular organization, D. and L. Towing. It is written by Joshua Bond. I think he makes a fairly good point. I just want to put on the record this particular part of that issue. He lists in the letter—I don't want to read it verbatim. Speaker, according to the rules of the House, I can't read this letter verbatim because you might rule that I'm using

a prop, as other Speakers have in the past, so I assure you that I'm not going to read it verbatim. Under 134.1(4), he is saying, "We are requesting, on behalf of our client, that the protection from liability being proposed under s. 134.1(4) be extended to those persons who have been ordered by the police or otherwise to attend at the scene to assist in the removal of objects that have interrupted the flow of traffic."

They are asking for specific amendments in 134.1(1) and 134.1(4) that would give us an opportunity to extend the protection from liability afforded to police officers and others listed in that subsection to those people who actually have to go out and do the work. That is a pretty reasonable amendment, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't you agree? Government, hopefully, is going to support that type of amendment, and I want to put that forward as one of them.

There is another issue. This is something that currently exists that maybe we can fix with this particular bill. It is related to removing emergency vehicles off the highway. What ends up happening is this. Let's say you have a transport truck that is out of the province of British Columbia and it is involved in an accident somewhere on a highway in Ontario. The truck in question, the British Columbia truck, ends up blocking the highway, so traffic can't flow as a result of the accident. A police officer shows up and says to the tow truck operator or the person responsible for cleaning up the mess on the highway, "Move this truck off the highway. Move it off into your yard somewhere. Get it out of here." The tow truck operator has been ordered by the police to tow the truck away from the scene of the accident, after the investigation, into a compound somewhere.

Now the problem is that obviously the person who operates the tow truck needs to be repaid for having done that tow call. One of the problems we have now is that because it is out of province, many times the insurance won't pay, because there is no mechanism within current legislation to allow the tow truck operator to have a proper lien in some cases. More importantly, there is no mechanism to force the insurance company from the other jurisdiction to pay, when they're settling the account on the damaged vehicle, the costs that were incurred by the tow truck operator to move that truck from the scene of the accident to wherever the truck was held, in a compound owned by the city, by the OPP, by someone else or by themselves, for that matter.

A number of tow truck operators have come to me and raised this issue. They have said they would like to have some sort of amendment in the legislation. We can take a look with legislative counsel, once we get to committee, to deal with the whole issue: Can an amendment be made to this legislation that would ensure that if a tow truck operator is ordered by the police to remove a vehicle from a highway and that particular vehicle is owned outside the province, or within the province, for that matter, there is some sort of mechanism to ensure that when the insurance company settles the bill—in other words, when the insurance company pays to fix the truck

or replace the truck if it's a write-off—the bill for the tow truck operator is also covered and paid by the insurance company? As it is right now, the tow truck operator ends up being further down the list. What you end up with is that the insurance company says, "OK, that truck from BC is a write-off. We're going to pay the owner of the truck or the fleet for the damages done to the particular truck," but there is no mechanism to make sure that the tow truck operator gets paid.

The tow truck operator can't say no to the police officer, that they're not going to tow the truck. They are forced to make the call. The tow truck operator shows up at the scene of the accident, knows it is a bill that he or she may not be able to collect on, but they have to tow it away because they're ordered to do it by the police, but there is no mechanism for them to collect at the end. We need some sort of mechanism that will block that particular loophole to give the tow truck operators an opportunity to collect on that.

1730

I want to thank my friend Luc Migneault from D. and L. Towing for having brought this issue up with me. Since he raised this, I've raised it with a couple of other operators across northern Ontario, and they had similar concerns.

On behalf of the operators not only in the north but across this province, I would ask that we move on those two amendments: (1) to extend liability coverage for the operators who do the removal of the wreck from a highway so they're not sued if additional damages are done, and (2) to have some sort of mechanism to make sure there is some ability for them to collect on a bill for having towed a vehicle they've been ordered by the police to take away.

There is another issue in this bill that I would like to raise. This is one I have a fair amount of sympathy for, for a couple of reasons, and that is the whole issue of the anti-scooping thing that's being put in the legislation. In this section of the bill, basically, as I see it, the minister is trying to be friends to the people, the constituents, he represents. I understand that; we're all parochial in our approach to this place sometimes. Unfortunately, I think what he's doing by bringing in these amendments is really a disservice to those licensed taxi drivers in the cities of Toronto, Mississauga and others who have to do business at Toronto Pearson airport.

Let me explain what the issue is. This isn't too complicated, but I'm going to try to do it as simply as I can, because it is somewhat involved. If you're a taxi driver, you are issued a licence for which you have to pay the city of Toronto to be able to do business within the jurisdiction of the city of Toronto. That licence allows you to pick up fares and drop off fares anywhere within the city of Toronto, and you pay a licensing fee for that.

If you're a limousine driver at the airport—"limousine" is a term used for those vehicles that run passengers from Toronto Pearson airport back into the city or to Mississauga or wherever they might be. Those people, because they do business at Pearson International, have



not so much a licence but a permit, a sort of licensing fee they pay the Toronto airport authority to be able to pick up passengers at the airport and deliver them to their destination, let's say in the city of Toronto, for the most part.

So you have two different people who end up at the airport: a cabbie who has a licence from the city of Toronto and primarily does business in the city but from time to time delivers people to the airport, and then you have those people who have a licence to operate out of the airport to deliver airport passengers from the airport into the city.

If I am a limousine driver out of Pearson airport and I have a licence from the GTA airport that says I can pick up people at the airport and drop them off in the city, there's an amendment in the Municipal Act that says those same drivers are able to pick up fares in the city of Toronto and bring them back to the airport. They've got a fee that they don't pay to any government but to a private entity at the Toronto airport because, as we know, Pearson airport is owned privately. They pay a fee to the Toronto airport authority to be able to do business at the airport, and they've got an amendment in the Municipal Act that says, "You can go into the city of Mississauga or Vaughan or Toronto or wherever, pick up a fare on the street and bring them back into the airport at Pearson."

But here's the inequity: If you're a cab driver for the city of Mississauga, Vaughan, Toronto or wherever, you pay a very large licence fee and you're able to pick up fares in the city and bring them to the airport, but you don't have a reciprocal agreement of any type to give cabbies the ability to pick up a fare at the airport and bring them back into the city of Toronto. There's a huge inequity there.

One of the things we're going to have to talk about once we go into the committee hearings is the whole issue of the inequity that exists between a cabbie working outside of the airport and a limousine driver working in the airport. There's an inequity. What you've got is legalized scooping by the limousine drivers when they come into the city of Toronto or other places, but the Toronto taxi drivers don't have a similar provision within any legislation to allow them to pick up a fare at the airport. The only thing they can do is that they have to prove they've had a pre-arranged fare, if they are a cabbie from the city of Toronto, and they have to pay about a \$10 fee, I think, for doing the actual pickup, when they pick up the fare in Toronto and bring the person back into Toronto.

So here are the taxi drivers from the city of Toronto paying a licensing fee to the city of Toronto. Whenever they need to pick somebody up at the airport, because there's a pre-arranged fare they're in a situation of having to pay an additional \$10 to the Pearson airport. But there is no similar requirement for a limousine driver when scooping a fare out of the city of Toronto to do the same thing to the city of Toronto. So there is an inequity.

You have a number of limousine drivers, quite frankly, who are doing business in the city of Toronto without

having to pay a licensing fee to the city of Toronto or to other municipalities, and are able to scoop to their heart's desire. In some cases, some of the limousine drivers say that if it's not too busy and a person opens the door and says, "I really don't want to go to Pearson but I'd like to go to Mississauga for something," the limousine driver says, "Sure, I'll bring you to Mississauga." Well, they don't have a licence to do that, and there is nothing in this bill to deal with that particular issue and to stop that illegal scooping that goes on on the part of the limousine drivers when they come into the city of Toronto.

I want to say I've got a bit of a personal thing in here for two reasons. One is, I am a frequent customer of the airport, coming out of the airport, flying down from Timmins every week, and obviously, with a number of other members in this Legislature, take the airline limousine into Toronto every week for some 40-odd dollars. What's the other company? Aerofleet, I think, is the other one. Normally, when I'm going back, I flag a cab somewhere if I'm down at my apartment or whatever and go back with a taxi—but not always, depending on where I am. So I have a certain affinity for the issue of scooping for two reasons. One is because I understand the issue as a customer from the airport back into the city, but also, I drove cabs some years ago when I came out of the armed forces. I drove a taxi for a number of years in the city of Timmins and understand just how hard a business it really can be to make a living. If you're having to compete against people who are non-licensed operators—scoopers, in other words—that can be very frustrating, because you pay a large fee in order to operate your cab every week, every year, within your municipality, both by way of operating costs, insurance, fees and licences to the municipality. It's pretty frustrating if here you are trying to do your business and the government turns a blind eye to people who are non-licensed operators going in and scooping business out from under your very nose. Pretty darn frustrating. You're a hard-working person. You normally work 12 hours, sometimes longer, per day, you pay your taxes, you work hard, and all you want is fair treatment on the part of the government. What we have now by way of what Minister Takhar is doing is legalized scooping on behalf of the airport drivers, to the chagrin and dismay of those taxi drivers, hard-working men and women in the city of Toronto and others.

I want to say, by way of this debate, that we're going to have to have some time at committee in order to deal with this particular amendment and to find some sort of fair and equitable arrangement when it comes to legislation, so that we make sure that we get rid of illegal scoopers—because what the minister is trying to do here is deal with the issue of those people who are scooping fares at the airport—and try to find some sort of equitable arrangements for cab drivers.

I want to say, the scoopers aren't the taxi drivers. It should be said, and that's what I forgot to say in my particular portion of debate. When I come out of the airport on Monday mornings or Sunday nights to get the cab, there are always a couple of people standing there. I

can recognize them. There are about five or six I know by face as soon as I see them. They are standing there, saying, "Do you need a taxi in town? Do you need a limo to get into town?" If I go out there, because I've gone out to take a look before, and it's not a taxi out of the city of Toronto but some guy with a private car who doesn't pay a licence fee to the airport authority of Toronto, looking to scoop fares out of Pearson, and that's what the minister is trying to shut down, fair enough.

I don't believe those people should be allowed to operate, for a number of reasons. For example, if I, the unsuspecting passenger, get into that car and there is an accident, where am I when it comes to liability insurance if something should happen and I somehow become injured and there might be a lawsuit involved? So you want to make sure that you're with a licensed operator who is properly trained and has the insurance to go with the service they are providing.

I want to say for the debate that the scoopers the minister is trying to put an end to are not taxi drivers; those are not the scoopers. They are actually other individuals who have their own private cars. I have seen some of these guys before. They used to be limousine drivers, in some cases, and lost their jobs. They go back and do it on their own. That's who we're getting at.

1740

What I'm looking for is an amendment that basically says we're going to treat airport limousine drivers the same way we treat taxi drivers. If pickups by limousine drivers are allowed in the city of Toronto, we should allow pickups at the Toronto airport by taxi drivers. If we don't allow taxi drivers to do pickups at the airport, we shouldn't allow limousine drivers to do pickups in the city of Toronto or in other municipalities. There's an inequity there that we need to deal with. We'll deal with that in committee, but I wanted to raise it.

There is one thing in the legislation that I kind of support but have some problems with, and that is the whole issue of fines. I have to say this is a bit of a money grab. If you look at this particular bill, there are a number of increases in fines for all kinds of things that you're not going to argue against because they're motherhood issues. If somebody is in a construction zone and is found to be speeding, there is going to be an increase in the fine. If somebody is found to have crossed a pedestrian crossing illegally, we're going to have an increase in fine. Again, it's kind of a motherhood issue, and I think most people would say, "Yeah, we'll increase the fines and that will be a way to deter those illegal activities and make our highways safer."

I want to say—and I've spoken to this on a number of issues—you can make the fines as high as you want, but if you don't have a fear of getting caught, you're still going to do it. It seems to me that we're kind of missing the boat a little bit here and not dealing with how you actually deter people from doing it. I argue that you have to figure out how they're going to get caught.

There are a couple of options. One is that the government can do what it promised to do in the last election

and hasn't done yet, and that is increase the number of police officers in Ontario. If we increase the number of police officers, supposedly we'll have more police officers to patrol for these particular infractions, and supposedly, if somebody fears they may get caught, and there's a higher risk because there are more police officers, maybe the increased fines will have some effect. Or you can utilize modern technology. There are cameras that can be utilized at intersections, crosswalks etc. What do they call them? It's not photo radar but the intersection ones to catch people who blow stop signs.

**Mr. Wilson:** Red light cameras.

**Mr. Bisson:** Red light cameras. That's what I was looking for—a similar type of technology or other technology installed in areas where we typically have these kinds of infractions. For example, if there's a pedestrian crossing we want to watch or keep an eye on, put a great big sign out saying that it's being watched by a camera, and if you are found not to stop when somebody presses the red button, you will be charged. I'll tell you, if I there's a big sign there and the light is flashing and there's a child crossing the road, and somebody is going to take my picture and that of my license plate and I'm going to get charged, I'm probably not going to break the law.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Or photo radar.

**Mr. Bisson:** Photo radar: That's another argument. If I know I'm going to get caught for speeding and get a ticket, I'm not going to speed. Why is it that people speed on our highways? Because they figure they're not going to get caught. That's why they do it. You can raise the fine from \$60 to \$120 for a 10-kilometre infraction over the speed limit, but at the end of the day, the person says to themselves, "Am I going to get caught?" And the driver says, "No, I don't think I will; therefore I'll speed." Well, I say, photo radar. Put the signs up in areas that are critical. I would go as far as to say that if you don't want to have speed traps where the driver doesn't know where they are, fair enough. But another way of doing it is that in areas we know are a problem we say: "Over the next number of kilometres, this stretch of highway is being controlled by photo radar. Zero tolerance for breaking the speed limit." I tell you, that will slow the traffic down real quick.

I'll give you a good example. Do you remember the Bob Rae NDP government, I say to the clerks? I remember; I was there with you. We introduced photo radar. Do you remember that? There was much chagrin by the Conservatives and the Liberals back then. But I always remember jumping into a cab at the airport after they put photo radar on and coming on to the 427. As soon as we got on the 427, the driver had to put the brakes on. Why? Because people were following the speed limit. Here's the interesting thing: You got into the city faster. You actually got there faster. Why? Because it wasn't the bumper to bumper, with somebody slamming on the brakes because something had just happened.

It happened today. I was driving into the city with a cab driver and all of a sudden, because everybody was



going in excess of the speed limit, somebody ahead of us put his brake lights on, and all of a sudden my cabbie just slammed on his brakes out of nowhere. Well, that created a whole bunch of congestion behind us. I just say that photo radar actually worked, because people said, "The speed limit is 90 or 100 kilometres an hour," and people did 90 or 100 kilometres an hour. It was as simple as that, because they knew that if they were speeding, they would get caught. Why? Because it was posted that there was photo radar.

So I say to the government that if we're serious about reducing accidents because of speed, if we're serious about reducing accidents because people blow red lights, stop signs, pedestrian crossings, speeding in a construction zone, as spoken to in this bill, we need to take a look at how we can really make it a deterrent. I argue that just raising the fines is not really, at the end of the day, going to do it the way we would like. You have to say, "We're going to put the people resources on our roads, hire police officers, or traffic officers if we feel there is another way of doing it, to make sure that we properly police those key areas where we know we have problems." At the Ministry of Transportation, and also within municipalities across Ontario, we have the stats to know where all the accidents are happening, so we're able to patrol those areas that are at highest risk. Or, the other argument would be to use new technologies. Say, "Here is a school crossing where we know we've had problems before." You post it. You say, "There's going to be a camera here, taking your picture, your smiling face and your licence plate number if you're found to be going through a pedestrian crossing when that thing is activated." We have the technology to do that.

I want to digress a little bit and talk about regulation. I have been waiting to give this speech for a little while. You can make as many rules as you want for the highway, but at the end of the day there has got to be some individual responsibility when it comes to what we do as drivers or as pedestrians. In North America and Europe generally, to my friends the pages—I know you're listening intently to this. You're going to get your drivers' licences not too long from now. I see all the guys and girls going, "Yah, we're going to get our driver's licence." Man, I couldn't wait to get mine. I'll tell you, my father regretted it, but that's another story. One day you're going to get a driver's licence and you'll be out there, driving. Don't you think that you, as new drivers, have a responsibility for driving safely? Of course. Our problem here in North America and in Europe is that we tend to figure that the way to make you safe is to fine you. Sometimes it's a little bit simpler than that, as far as, why don't we make each other aware of what our responsibilities are as drivers and as pedestrians?

I'll give you a good example. I was in Vietnam in January this year. I was there on behalf of l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, as the president of our section here in Ontario, at a meeting called le bureau. That's where basically all the nations come together that are part of l'APF in order to decide the business for the

year. So here I am; I go off to Vietnam. I've been in many places around the world. I've been in Europe a lot, where driving rules are very different from Ontario and North America. I think that generally traffic there probably runs a little bit better, considering that they have more traffic than us. But here they are: Vietnam. There is one traffic law—get a load of this—the biggest vehicle will be charged. That's the traffic law. There are hardly any stop signs; there are hardly any red lights. On a two-lane road like the one in front of your school, where one car can go this way and one can go that way, they drive four parallel cars along that road, sometimes five. Interesting: no traffic laws; no stop signs; nothing. What do they do to turn? They take a flowerpot and put it in the intersection, and everybody wanting to turn left has to go around the flowerpot. That's the rule. That's how it works over there.

Here's the interesting thing. They have about a million vehicles—a million motorcycles, I should say—on the street in Vietnam plus a whole bunch of vehicles—trucks and cars—and a whole bunch of pedestrians trying to cross, and people on bicycles. Per capita, they have fewer accidents than we do in North America, and they have no traffic laws. You have to ask yourself why. I think the answer is kind of simple: People watch out. Pedestrians don't walk across the road and say, "That green light is going to protect my life; therefore I can walk and not look to both sides." Right? The person says, "Hang on. I'm taking my life in my hands. All right, I can go," and then they walk with the traffic. It's really interesting.

**1750**

I was in Hanoi. I got in the cab and ended up in Hanoi. The next morning I got up right in the middle of the city, and there were mopeds going every which way, up and down the road. There were cars, trucks, people on bicycles, a granny running down with her—what do they call that again: the vegetables on both sides of her shoulder? And I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to cross the road, and I'm doing one of these. I watched everybody else and they just went, so I just went when I thought it was somewhat safe, and they all flowed around me. It was kind of interesting. People would go behind me, people would go in front of me, trucks would go this way, a car would go that way. I'd be on this side of the road and cars would be going both ways. I'd be on that side of the road, and there would be cars going both ways. But everybody watched out. When I crossed to the other side of the road, I was aware of my environment, so I took the responsibility of going like this, and those people driving the mopeds, granny running with her whatever you call it and the women driving the trucks and cars and the rest of it kind of watched out for each other.

The whole time we were in Vietnam—there were about four or five days of meetings and I built a holiday around it. I was there for a total of about three weeks—I must add, on my dime for the other two weeks. In fact, I used my Aeroplan to fly, as the Clerk well knows. Maybe I shouldn't have done that, but that's another story. Anyway, the point is that I saw not one accident.

My brother and I had some fun—my brother came with me. We were in the old capital, Hue, at the Saigon Morin hotel, a wonderful place in the middle of Hue, a beautiful old imperial city in Vietnam. Our hotel overlooked the busiest street corner in the city of Hue and one of the main bridges crossing the rivière des Parfums. I forget what the name of the road was in front of the hotel—a major, major intersection. After the meetings, my brother and I would have a great time sitting down for an hour and a half or two hours for the four or five days we were in Hue smoking nice big stogies and drinking a nice glass of gin and water out on our balcony overlooking this intersection. We watched and watched. We said, “Sure as heck we’re going to see an accident here.” We were like the two guys in the Muppet Show. Do you know the two old guys in the Muppet Show sitting there and heckling at the crowd? That was my brother and I. Here we are, at the Saigon Morin hotel overlooking the intersection, and we were disappointed: four or five days and not an accident. After a couple of days, we decided we’d go and talk to some of the locals or to the police officers who were here and there sort of watching what was going on. We asked them, “Are there a lot of accidents?” They said no.

I had a bit of an opportunity to speak to some of the members of the Vietnamese National Assembly about it. I asked them for some stats, which, by the way, I haven’t received yet. Maybe I should call the Vietnamese government and tell them this is an incident of diplomatic relations between Canada and Vietnam, but that’s another story. The interesting thing was, they were basically saying there are not a lot of accidents. When you do have an accident, it’s an accident. If somebody goes walking out on the street and doesn’t watch and there’s a 10-ton truck coming, I can tell you it’s probably going to be a pretty serious accident. The point is, there seem to be fewer accidents. All I’m saying is that sometimes regulation is good, but my friends the pages—drivers’ licences next year or the year after, right? I’m just elevating you by another year. I used to love it when I was your age and somebody thought I was older. I just loved that. Anyway, that’s another story. Now that I’m older, I like it when people think I’m younger.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** You’re never happy. When you’re young, you want to be old; when you’re old, you want to be young. I just know that Mark Twain got it right: Youth is something that’s wasted on the young. That’s very true.

My point is that we have to have some internal responsibility when it comes to how we drive and how we flow traffic on our roads. People need to look around a little bit. I just say to my good friends who are here today, maybe part of what we need to do is a little bit more about making people aware of the environment they drive in and walk in so we don’t take for granted that crossing on the green is necessarily going to make it a safe place for you to cross. You should look both ways before you go.

My good friend Mr. Wilson raised an issue, at least with me privately—I don’t know if he raised it when he

did his leadoff—and that is the issue of the autobahn, which is another example. The autobahn is one of the first freeways built in Europe, I would imagine; if not, for sure in Germany. The autobahn is one of the few highways in the world that has no speed limit. Imagine: You’re 16 years old, you’ve just got your driver’s licence and dad has a Lamborghini. Which one of you is going to drive the Lamborghini? Ah, Mr. Ryan back there wants to drive the Lamborghini. He knows what a Lamborghini is. It’s one hot car. If you ever get a chance to drive a Lamborghini, guys, jump in. It’s the one where the door opens on the side and it does 200 miles an hour in neutral. It’s just one heck of a car. You can literally get in your Lamborghini and go up the autobahn at any speed you want and they won’t pull you over.

The interesting thing is, when it comes to accidents, there are fewer accidents on the autobahn compared to similar freeways in North America. Again, when you have an accident, there will probably be a fatality associated with it, because you’re talking about pretty high speeds. But my point is that we need to be aware of where we’re driving and the environment that we’re in.

I’ve had the opportunity—I forget the highway number. Who has been to Italy here? A whole bunch of us? What’s the name of the big freeway that goes down the western coast of Italy? I can’t remember. I think it’s A11. I’ve driven it a couple of times. That highway as well: If you take a look at the speeds that are posted on it, it’s 100 kilometres an hour in the right lane and 160 kilometres in the left lane. And the little Renault diesel I’ve rented, mon Dieu, you can push it to the metal all you want, but you’ll never get it to 160. The point is that there are fewer accidents on that freeway as well, according to some of the people I’ve talked to.

So it’s not necessarily on the freeways. It’s in the city, and that’s my point. If you go to Rome, if you go to a number of cities, there’ll be more accidents in the cities—

**Mr. Wilson:** Paris.

**Mr. Bisson:** Paris and others—because of the congestion in there. I think part of the reason is that people rely on the rules, and there’s always somebody driving in the traffic who doesn’t know the rules or is lost, who goes somewhere they’re not supposed to be and gets themselves into an accident. But even A11, which runs down the west coast of Italy, coming up from Monaco, with high speeds, has fewer accidents and fatalities per kilometre than we do on some of our major freeways in North America.

Increasing fines, as you want to do in this bill, is not a bad thing. I’m not saying that increasing the fines doesn’t have some effect. I’m just saying there are other things that we should be looking at in North America. For example, as I said, let’s make sure that we have people out there, enough cops or enough technology, to catch people when they’re committing these particular infractions. The fear of getting caught is probably going to stop someone from doing it. Sometimes we need to make sure that there is a certain amount of, how would you



say—I don't want to use the words "common sense." It worries me when I say that. I feel myself drifting to the right.

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** What, drifting to the right?

**Mr. Bisson:** I know; it's pretty hard to believe coming from me. The point is that I think drivers and pedestrians need to have a little bit of, how would you say, internal responsibility.

I just say to members here, in the last couple of minutes I've got: Always remember that the parliamentary associations that are part of this assembly—either the commonwealth association, l'Assemblée parlementaire or others—are really good associations to take part in. People should check with their caucuses or with the table as to when they meet. You make all kinds of really interesting connections with different people; from time to time you get to travel and see interesting things. For

example, we had a great opportunity two weeks ago to meet with the Republican senator and congressman from Michigan, I think it was. It was fascinating: their particular view, how they approach issues in their jurisdiction. We're able to exchange ideas.

I encourage members, in the last minute I have—I know we're almost out of time for today—to participate in these associations, because they're quite beneficial to us as members. It gives us a bit of an opportunity to measure off what's going on in other jurisdictions, and I think they help you grow as a member. I encourage people to participate in those. I would just say that it's almost 6 of the clock. I will continue this debate the next time we meet.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being nearly 6 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45 this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

## CONTENTS

Monday 25 April 2005

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Municipal finances</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6497
<b>Hot Docs film festival</b>	
Mr. Marchese .....	6497
<b>Anti-smoking legislation</b>	
Mr. McNeely .....	6497
<b>Justice system</b>	
Mr. Runciman .....	6498
<b>Earth Week</b>	
Mr. Racco .....	6498
<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Baird .....	6498
<b>Government's record</b>	
Mr. Arthurs .....	6499
Mr. Wilkinson .....	6499
<b>Doctors' services</b>	
Mrs. Matthews .....	6499

### MOTIONS

<b>Appointment of Environmental Commissioner</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6500
Agreed to .....	6500
<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6500
Agreed to .....	6500

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Infrastructure program funding</b>	
Mr. Gerretsen .....	6500
Mr. Hudak .....	6501
Mr. Prue .....	6502

### ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Municipal finances</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6502
Mr. Phillips .....	6503
Mr. Gerretsen .....	6504, 6507
Mr. Hudak .....	6507
<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6504
Mr. Kennedy .....	6504
<b>Services for the hearing-impaired</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6507
Mr. Kennedy .....	6507

### School closures

Mr. Gravelle .....	6508
Mr. Kennedy .....	6508

### Assistance to farmers

Mr. Hardeman .....	6509
Mr. Peters .....	6509

### Duffins-Rouge agricultural preserve

Ms. Churley .....	6509
Mr. Phillips .....	6509

### Infrastructure program funding

Mr. Craiton .....	6510
Mr. Gerretsen .....	6510

### Police services

Mr. Dunlop .....	6510
Mr. Kwinter .....	6511

### Air ambulance service

Mr. Prue .....	6511
Mr. Kennedy .....	6511

### Energy conservation

Mr. McMeekin .....	6512
Mr. Duncan .....	6512

### PETITIONS

<b>Justice system</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6512
<b>Anaphylactic shock</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6512, 6514, 6515
<b>Halton recycling plant</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	6513
<b>Credit Valley Hospital</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6513, 6514
<b>Frederick Banting homestead</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6513
<b>Abortion</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6514
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6514, 6515
<b>Anti-smoking legislation</b>	
Mr. Martiniuk .....	6515
<b>Senior citizens</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6515

### SECOND READINGS

<b>Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005,</b>	
Bill 169, <i>Mr. Takhar</i>	
Mr. Takhar .....	6516, 6520

Mr. Kular .....	6516
Mr. Lalonde .....	6517
Mr. Dunlop .....	6518
Mr. Bisson .....	6519, 6531
Mr. McNeely .....	6519
Mr. Martiniuk .....	6519
Mr. Wilson .....	6520, 6530
Mr. Marchese .....	6529
Mr. Milloy .....	6530
Mr. O'Toole .....	6530
Mr. Sterling .....	6530
Debate deemed adjourned .....	6537

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### Visitors

Mr. Baird .....	6500
The Speaker .....	6502
Mrs. Chambers .....	6513

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 25 avril 2005

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2005 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le transport,</b>	
projet de loi 169, <i>M. Takhar</i>	
M. Lalonde .....	6517
M. Bisson .....	6519
Débat présumé ajourné .....	6537





No. 134B

N° 134B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 25 April 2005**

**Lundi 25 avril 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 April 2005

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 avril 2005

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE PEEL

Mr. Gerretsen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 186, Loi traitant de la composition du conseil de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Duguid, the member from Scarborough Centre.

I would like to start off by introducing certain people in the audience today who are here to watch the proceedings. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Mayor Susan Fennell, who is wearing her chain of office, and councillors Bob Callahan, Grant Gibson, Susan DiMarco, Sandra Hames, Gael Miles and John Hutton, and I believe there are also a number of staff members and commissioners from the city of Brampton here today. I would certainly like to take this opportunity to welcome them here as we discuss this bill.

Our government is committed to building and supporting strong communities across Ontario. We have taken a number of actions to fulfill this commitment. Our greenbelt plan is just one of the ways we are building stronger communities, and we are proud of the legacy we have created with the greenbelt plan, which protects our natural resources and agricultural lands from urban sprawl, improving the quality of life for millions of Ontarians.

Our new provincial policy statement, which promotes a balanced approach to planning, will also help to build stronger communities. It reflects what we heard in our municipal consultation, and it builds on the priorities of local communities.

Earlier today, I announced that over 120 projects to renew local infrastructure have been approved. These

projects are part of the COMRIF, or Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, in which our government will invest up to \$298 million to help communities rebuild their public infrastructure, with the federal government and local governments giving an equal amount over the next five years.

Our memorandum of understanding with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario illustrates how we as a government are committed to consulting with municipalities, including working toward having municipalities involved in federal-provincial discussions on such issues as immigration, affordable housing and the sharing of the federal gas tax revenues. Our comprehensive review of Ontario's municipal act will identify how the act can continue to remain relevant and provide municipalities with the necessary tools to serve Ontario's citizens better.

In all of these initiatives, we have consulted extensively with municipalities and acted on those consultations. This government continues to demonstrate that we will work closely with our municipal partners.

A few days ago, on April 13, I introduced first reading of Bill 186, the Regional Municipality of Peel Act, 2005. We believe that this bill promotes stability in Peel region. It provides a fair and balanced approach to the composition of Peel regional council and better reflects Peel's current population distribution. If passed, it would enable Peel region to turn its full attention to providing effective services for the citizens of Peel.

## 1850

In Peel region, there has been much debate about the composition of Peel regional council. This long-standing debate has led to uncertainty at Peel regional council and is affecting its ability to carry out its responsibilities.

Let me say that Peel region is one of the models of effective administration in carrying out municipal responsibilities. As a matter of fact, in November last year it received the National Quality Institute's Canada Award for Excellence at the service level: the first municipal government to receive such an award in Ontario, and indeed Canada.

However, for local issues of this nature, this government believes that solutions should be developed at the local level, solutions that reflect the perspectives of all affected municipalities. This government and I on a number of occasions have emphasized this approach with Peel region as well. We have encouraged local representatives, the three mayors and the regional chair, to find a local solution to the challenges surrounding

local governance. Given the difficulties the local representatives had in reaching an agreement, our government became involved, looking to assist the region in finding a local consensus on the issue. We had numerous discussions with the representatives from Peel region, including the mayors and regional chair, who provided important insights into their perspectives on this matter. We also appointed a facilitator to try to help the parties reach an agreement. Once again our actions illustrate that we are a government that values input from its municipal partners and is willing to listen to their ideas. We made every possible effort to develop a solution at the local level. However, after all that, a consensus simply could not be found. So we have decided that we need to move forward. We need to move beyond this roadblock. Peel region needs to have stability. This is a matter that needs to be resolved.

By moving forward with the proposed legislation, our intention is to provide the certainty and resolution on governance issues that the lower-tier municipalities in Peel region—namely the city of Brampton, the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon—require. Resolving this matter will allow Peel regional council to resume its leadership role in providing regional services. With the support of this Legislature, this bill will provide a fair solution to Peel's challenges that avoids unnecessary and disruptive restructuring or dismantling of the region.

We have considered the concerns of all the parties and we are looking to strike a balance among the diverse local interests. We believe that the best way to do this is for Peel regional council to more realistically represent the current population distribution of Peel region, while ensuring that no single lower-tier municipality has voting control of the regional council. The proposed legislation will give Brampton one additional seat on the regional council, for a total of seven, and give Mississauga two additional seats, for a total of 12. Caledon will continue to have five seats. The chair of the regional council will also have one vote. As in the past, the members of the Peel regional council will be responsible for selecting the chair of the regional council.

Our government recognizes that governance and municipal service delivery can be extremely complex in its nature. I would like to thank local representatives for the dedication in seeking a solution to Peel's challenges, and I know that these can be very difficult issues to deal with. I want to recognize their efforts and also encourage all elected officials in Peel region to move forward to continue to provide the strong leadership that has helped the region be one of Ontario's most effective and efficient for many decades.

The proposed legislation provides the necessary stability for Peel to resume focusing on providing service to its citizens. It enables these municipalities to focus on what they do best. I am confident that the residents of Peel can count on their elected officials to continue working to ensure that their quality of life is second to

none, and I urge the members of the House to support these objectives and vote in favour of Bill 186.

In addition, I should point out a number of salient facts.

First of all, regarding the Adams report that was issued as a result of his having been appointed the facilitator in trying to build a consensus among the parties, the government has adopted eight of the nine recommendations. The only recommendation we could not accept was the recommendation for an additional number of members for a population that may very well increase in the future but is not currently there today. We think seat distribution should follow population growth and not be in advance of that.

There have been some supportive quotes. Mayor Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga, is quoted as saying, "The province made a fair decision." Mayor Marolyn Morrison, the mayor of Caledon, has said, "We need to get on with serving the residents of Peel and quit the silliness." John Tory, the Leader of the Opposition, in an all-candidates debate on March 8, 2005, said, "There is a need to refine these governments as time goes on, as populations change and communities change." That is exactly what we're doing here tonight with this bill.

I might just indicate what the current population of the region of Peel is. Currently, the population of Brampton stands at 380,000, Caledon at 55,000, and Mississauga at 689,000. The average population per councillor currently is 63,300 for Brampton and 68,900 for Mississauga, and Caledon, being a much smaller community, has an average population per councillor of 11,000. The proposed model that we're suggesting, which would see Brampton's representation increase by one to seven, and Mississauga's from 10 to 12, would mean that the average population per councillor in Brampton will be 54,285, and for Mississauga 57,416. Let me state once again that we have not created a situation in which one municipality will have a majority of the members on the regional council. With a 12, seven and five alignment, none of the municipalities will have the majority vote on the council.

#### 1900

We have a rather unique situation. It is the only region in which one municipality has more than 50% of the population. We simply felt that it was something we had to deal with after all the attempted facilitation and attempts at building a consensus among the parties.

Let me also state that, as far as this government is concerned, we are not restructuring the region of Peel. We are merely adjusting the regional council representation so that it more fairly reflects the population distribution of Peel and balances the interests of the lower-tier municipalities.

With that, I simply urge all the members of the House to support these objectives and vote in favour of Bill 186.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** I too want to acknowledge the presence of Mayor Fennell and her members of council. My colleague from Brampton Centre advised me that there's another councillor we missed



in the introduction. Councillor Elaine Moore is here. Welcome.

**The Deputy Speaker:** While we're making all these recognitions, there is also a councillor who was introduced as a councillor but who is also a former member of this Legislature. In the west members' gallery, we have Robert Callahan, former member from Brampton and Brampton South, in the 33rd through 35th Parliaments. Welcome.

Mr. Duguid, you can continue.

**Mr. Duguid:** I believe Mayor Marolyn Morrison is here as well in the visitors' gallery behind us. I can't see her from where I am, but the Speaker can probably see her. It's great to have these visitors here.

Before I begin speaking, I'm going to say something about somebody who's not here. I know it's not parliamentary to say that, Speaker, but I think in this case you'll allow me to do so. My colleague and seatmate Vic Dhillon, from Brampton West—Mississauga, would normally be here tonight, but he became a happy father on the weekend, on Sunday, so he's otherwise occupied tonight. I know he has taken an active interest in this debate, as have all our colleagues from that particular region.

I'm pleased to speak to this proposed legislation. If passed, I recognize that it will bring stability to Peel region and provide a fair and balanced approach to the composition of Peel regional council. Peel region has for decades been one of Ontario's most effective and efficient regions—something that's respected Ontario-wide. As the minister stated earlier and is worth repeating, this municipality in Canada was the first to achieve the silver level in the Awards for Excellence, which recognized Peel as an outstanding public-sector organization, something very fitting and well deserved and something that came from the hard work of all the local representatives throughout the entire region. Our government is proud to support Peel region as it continues to deliver excellent services, services that help maintain a quality of life in Peel that is among the best in all of Canada.

However, there is a long-standing debate about the governance of Peel region which has led to uncertainty in that particular region. Local representatives have had prolonged deliberations about the number of regional councillors that should come from each lower-tier municipality—I hate using the phrase “lower-tier municipality,” but it exists—but they've been unable to reach an agreement. That's just a fact. It has nothing to do, really, with the people involved; it's just one of those very, very complex issues, and it has been hard for them to reach an agreement.

This long-standing debate is affecting how Peel regional council operates and its ability to carry out its responsibilities. It's an issue that needs to be resolved. Peel regional council needs to have stability. The people of Peel deserve nothing less. Peel regional council needs to be able to focus on what it's doing and what it's doing

well, and that is providing effective services to the people of Peel.

From the beginning, our government has encouraged Peel region to find a local solution to the challenges surrounding local governments. We became involved only when it became apparent that an agreement could not be reached among local representatives, and we've continued to focus on finding a local solution to this issue.

Our actions are consistent with our commitment to consult with and work together with our municipal partners. We've demonstrated this commitment time after time and have proven that we respect municipalities and value their input. This is in stark contrast to the approach taken by the previous government. The McGuinty government respects municipalities as bona fide orders of government, represented by duly elected members of council and fully accountable to those who elect them. From our greenbelt plan to our review of the Municipal Act to our relationship with AMO, we've illustrated that municipal perspectives are extremely important to this government. We listen to our municipal partners, we respect them, and we do all we can to help them do the tough work they have to do.

In our actions surrounding the issue of Peel governance, we've once again consulted significantly with local representatives. We've had numerous discussions with local representatives from Peel region and have listened to the various positions, and there have been various and disparate positions brought forward.

We also appointed a facilitator, Mr. Justice George Adams, to work toward finding an agreement about the composition of Peel regional council and to address municipal service delivery issues. Justice Adams provided a report that contained a number of recommendations for our government to consider, and I stress that word “consider.” He wasn't appointed to make the decision; he was appointed to give us advice—advice that we've taken a very close, long and hard look at. Many of the recommendations he made were recommendations we agreed with. We appreciate Justice Adams's efforts and work on this matter.

As it turned out, unfortunately a local consensus was not achieved about Justice Adams's recommendations for the composition of Peel regional council. It's unfortunate that a consensus couldn't be reached, but, as I said earlier, that really speaks not so much about the people involved as about the complexity of this particular issue. I think we have to be sensitive to differences of opinion, because we're going to see some differences of opinion on this issue. That's something we expect, something we welcome, something that's just part of this process. It's a complex issue. Not everybody is going to agree on it, but at the end of the day, what we reached is a balanced proposal that will bring stability and certainty to Peel.

That's what we had to do: We had to move toward a resolution on this particular matter. We need to move forward so that Peel regional council can resume its leadership role in providing regional services. The proposed legislation would provide this resolution and

enable Peel region to move forward. It would strike a balance among diverse local interests. It would more realistically reflect the current population distribution of Peel while preserving the voice of all communities. The proposed legislation outlines a more reasonable form of representation, yet it ensures that no single-tier municipality has voting control of regional council. Our proposed legislation does not restructure the region of Peel; it simply adjusts the representation on regional council in a fair and balanced manner. "Fair and balanced" is the key.

The Adams report had proposed that the size of Peel council be based on future population growth. However, we believe that seat distribution should follow population growth rather than lead it. This means that representation takes into account the current population rather than being based on future population growth. The proposed adjustment to Peel council would follow this approach while still taking into account the need to balance the interests of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

Justice Adams also provided a number of recommendations on ways to address service delivery issues in Peel. We fully endorse most of these recommendations and encourage municipal governments to implement them. We realize that municipal service delivery and local governance can be complex issues. The situation in Peel is a testament to this.

We're confident that the lower-tier municipalities in Peel will work together to realize the benefits of this proposed legislation. We're confident that having certainty about local governance will help them focus on working together to provide effective services for their people.

Our government knows that all local representatives are dedicated to serving their communities. We acknowledge their hard work in addressing the challenges in Peel region and we look forward to continuing to work with municipalities as we continue to move forward with building stronger communities. To support stability and strong communities in Peel region, I encourage all members of this Legislature to support Bill 186.

1910

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm very pleased to be here this evening. My colleague Tim Hudak will be here in a few minutes for our comments on the first reading and for our leadoff, but I've been very intrigued with the debate so far.

I listened to the previous two speakers, the minister and his parliamentary assistant, and the first thing I can think of is the number of seats you want. In your recent throne speech, you talked about a minimum of X number of seats in the north, but those comments never centred on representation by population. In this case, you were quick to jump on the bandwagon to present a new piece of legislation.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Are you against preserving the north seats?

**Mr. Dunlop:** The bottom line is that you're the one who had the platform. You're the ones who said that

we're going to have a minimum of 11 seats in the north, and if you—

**The Deputy Speaker:** I feel a little left out of this conversation. Through the Chair, please.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Mr. Speaker, if they would follow the same pattern—where do they stand on this issue? It's representation by population in Peel region, but in the rest of the province, it doesn't matter. That's all I'm trying to point out here. That will be brought up a number of times during this debate, because we intend to discuss this. There's nothing wrong with what you're doing in Peel region, but you're going against the very grain of what you're saying in your platform. That's all I wanted to point out. I'd like the minister to explain otherwise.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I'm telling Jim Gordon.

**Mr. Dunlop:** That's fine. The Minister of Tourism can talk to Mr. Gordon or whomever he wants. The bottom line is that they're not following their own party platform in the throne speech. We'll be listening to the rebuttal tonight, and we'll also be interested in hearing their comments on why anything would be different in Peel region.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I watched the honourable minister on television. I watched what he had to say about the extensive consultation. Well, I beg to differ, because what you quoted from the mayors is not what they are telling you in letters directly to you.

The first one, April 4, from Mayor Fennell:

"As you are also aware, Mr. Premier, Mayor Morrison and I formally objected in writing to the appointment of a provincial facilitator, urging your government to allow Peel's municipalities to develop a local solution within the purpose and intent of the Municipal Act: a public, transparent and open process prescribed in law. Your government chose to circumvent the provisions of the act, and both Caledon and Brampton participated in the facilitation process under the direction of Judge Adams, and we did so in good faith."

The mayor again, this time dated April 11, writing in a media release:

"This Premier gave me his word there would be no restructuring in Peel," said Mayor Fennell. "This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that this Premier's word is gold, not coal."

"Mayor Fennell expressed frustration that no details on the proposed legislation were made available by Minister Gerretsen on April 7, and has requested an urgent meeting with the Premier in order to convey the position of Brampton residents and gain some perspective on his government's decision."

Far from dealing with them in an open and transparent way, I suggest that you have excluded them. You have dealt with this behind closed doors. You have excluded them from all meaningful consultation. You have only consulted with one mayor, and we all know which one that is. You have excluded Brampton and Caledon, and you have done a disservice to the people of Peel.



**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** People in Ontario who are watching this will ask, what is the issue that this bill addresses? It's about a governance structure, which is what Peel region is.

Some 30 years ago, what are now two large cities, Mississauga and Brampton, and one prosperous town, Caledon, were semi-rural areas in which small settlements were knit together by roads. Peel region was set up to permit these small settlements—with names that are still neighbourhood names today: Streetsville, Cooksville, Erindale, and similar names in Brampton and in Caledon—and other areas to afford roads, water, sewer, waste disposal, and some other services. There was no Brampton or Mississauga then as we know them now. That was then; this is now.

People in my city of Mississauga ask now, "Why do we need a fourth level of government?" Peel region is just a governance structure, and it's not cast in stone. It can and should and must evolve with time. When Peel's representation was first distributed, there was no way to predict the explosive growth in the region in general and Mississauga in particular. Mississauga asked last year, "Why do we need this governance structure any more? Its day has come and gone."

But that's for another time; this is now. The minister has said that Bill 168 is about rebalancing the representation on Peel regional council—nothing more, nothing less. It merely amends the representation within a governance structure. With more than 680,000 residents, about the same as the population of New Brunswick, Mississauga represents two thirds of the region's population but has a minority of seats on the regional council. The proposed solution brings Mississauga's portion of the regional council to exactly half. Brampton and Caledon will be no more hard done by in the future than Mississauga was in the past. That's why I support the bill.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** While I represent a riding in the east, I have some knowledge of the city of Brampton. I have some good friends, and I also know of this issue to some degree. This really is a betrayal of the people of Brampton. It's a betrayal of the growing trend in Peel region. There has been no effort on the part of Mississauga to reach a compromise with regard to the representation on the regional council of Peel.

There is no question that this is payback time: payback time by the Liberal government to the mayor of Mississauga. This is a betrayal of the people of Brampton and Caledon with regard to what is going to go forward in terms of regional government in Peel.

We have in the audience the mayor of Brampton, who is watching this debate tonight. I congratulate Linda Jeffrey, a member from Brampton, who's going to vote against this bill because she feels the same way I do with respect to the regional councillors in Peel.

Over the past history of the regional council of Peel, on only two occasions have there been blocked votes by the municipalities. These regional councillors have acted

reasonably in the past and they will act reasonably in the future. Let's make a decision for the future; not, for some unknown reason, to try to placate the ambitions of a municipality that wants to maintain control of Peel region.

#### **The Deputy Speaker: Reply?**

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me start by saying that in the 10 years I have been here, I have never hurled personal accusations against members on the other side of the House, whether I was on that side or on this side. I resent some of the comments that were made here tonight.

We did everything in our power to allow the parties to bring consensus to their own situation. I have the highest regard for Mayor Fennell, Mayor Morrison, Mayor McCallion and Chairman Kolb. I am absolutely positive that they are working as hard as they possibly can for their individual municipalities. We have made every effort to allow the parties themselves to reach a consensus. We allowed for about three or four months last year, starting at just about this time, or it may even have been in March, to try to get them to work out the solutions themselves. They weren't able to. We appointed Justice Adams, and we agree with eight of the nine recommendations he made. We simply cannot agree with the notion that you appoint people to represent the municipality now for future population growth. It may very well be that at some point in the future this will have to be revisited.

I again confirm the fact that no one municipality will have a majority vote. It's my understanding that over the past 10 to 12 years, the chair of the municipality has been chosen with support from all three municipalities. There's absolutely no reason that can't continue.

We think Bill 186 is the right thing to do, and that's why we're asking members on all sides of the House to vote for this.

1920

#### **The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?**

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to rise and contribute to the debate as the official opposition's critic on Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel. I welcome Her Worship Mayor Fennell, the members of the Brampton council and the other municipal leaders here today. I'm not supposed to wave to the gallery, but I will acknowledge that it's great to see people here tonight, Mr. Speaker. As you know, it's rather uncommon to have guests in the gallery during a night sitting, which I think shows the degree of angst that exists in some of the constituent municipalities of the region of Peel, not only over the changes in this legislation but also over what it may do to what has always been a model region.

It also epitomizes the problems with Dalton McGuinty and his style of leadership. Let me get into that first, before I get into the specifics of the bill. On Friday, April 1, the Brampton Guardian had an excellent editorial that characterized the nature of Dalton McGuinty's decision-making around this very important debate about the fu-

ture of Peel. The editorial is entitled "Dalton Is Waffling."

**Mr. Dunlop:** No kidding.

**Mr. Hudak:** My colleague from Simcoe North says, "No kidding." As my colleagues know, a common aspect of debate during question period in this Legislature is about the number of times that Dalton McGuinty has changed his mind on issues. He's not exactly somebody who sticks to his word.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** That's a bit of an understatement, I say to my friend from Ottawa.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** I know the member from Scarborough had been a big supporter of John Tory. Now he's changed his mind, I guess, and is no longer a big supporter of John Tory. I know the member from Scarborough has several positions on the issue.

But to get back to the point, Dalton McGuinty has established an incredible record of broken promises in a very short period of time. We've been quantifying them, and I think it's some 45 or 46. You lose track of the broken promises. Not only does he break promises, but it seems that if he gets pushed enough, he always bends. Dalton McGuinty has a habit of drawing a line in the sand and then, as soon as push comes to shove, he retreats. I believe this issue speaks to that style of leadership, which I find to be a very unfortunate style of leadership, or lack thereof, for the province of Ontario.

The Brampton Guardian: "Dalton Is Waffling."

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** They're very brave when Hazel's not in the gallery.

**Mr. Hudak:** I say to my friend from St. Catharines that I think the Brampton Guardian would say this no matter who was reading the Guardian, but people may not have had the chance. The opening paragraph:

"Dalton Is Waffling

"Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal Party are quickly becoming the punchline to a joke. From now on, when people make promises they have no intention of keeping or say one thing and then do another, we can accuse them of 'pulling a McGuinty.'"

**Mr. Dunlop:** Or a Dalton.

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, they called it "pulling a McGuinty" in the Brampton Guardian.

The editorial goes on to say in conclusion about their degree of disappointment in Dalton McGuinty's leadership on this issue:

"What it all comes down to is the indecisiveness and pandering of our Premier.

"Dalton, please, it's time to end this. It's time to put into place the recommendations of your hand-picked facilitator.

"Failing that, it's time to back off from the situation entirely."

Then they conclude, "But the worst thing you can do is come across as a spineless lackey...."

Those aren't my words. They are the words of the Brampton Guardian registering their strong disappoint-

ment, and, I would argue, if I am reading the faces in the gallery correctly, the strong disappointment of municipal leaders in Brampton and Caledon with the Premier's indecisiveness and lack of leadership on this very important issue.

It's not only for Peel region. I hope in my remarks to talk about how this may impact the rest of the province as well, but for the here and now, it's a major issue that has taken a significant degree of the energy of municipal leaders in Peel region away from focusing on other important issues—improving police services, for example, improving local roads, local health services—that I know they're committed to. But because Dalton McGuinty has had this long, twisted dance around this issue—probably almost a year of this government's involvement—it has taken a lot of energy away from focusing on improving municipal services and to the issue of how many councillors from each of the municipalities are going to sit around the table.

I'll give some specifics behind the Brampton Guardian's editorial. Let's look at the history. The platform of Dalton McGuinty when he was in opposition was an encyclopedia of promises. If you had an issue, he had a promise for you. He was so keen on moving from this side of the floor to that side of the floor that he promised everything to everybody.

We saw a very, very sad situation, by way of example, just a few weeks ago.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Autistic children.

**Mr. Hudak:** The member from Simcoe North is on to the issue right away. Autistic children over the age of six and their parents came to this gallery and called on Dalton McGuinty to keep his promise to fund autistic services to children over two. He wrote down and pledged to these parents and their disabled children, those suffering from autism, that he would increase funding. He has broken that promise. He broke a promise to parents and children suffering from autism. It is hard to imagine a more ignoble action than breaking a promise to parents and the autistic children they are trying to help out.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission ordered Dalton McGuinty, recommended that, and a court recommended it, but still Dalton McGuinty was keen on breaking that promise.

The point I was making is that back in the days when Dalton McGuinty was promising everything to everybody to try to win some seats, to get his ambition to become the Premier of Ontario, there was no promise left unturned. If you wanted it, it was yours; it was in the platform. And we've seen the result: already, to date, 40-some broken promises, and the province is hurtling back to the big, bad debt days under the NDP.

Sadly, I think all politicians now have been tainted by Dalton McGuinty. People say, "All you guys break your promises." It's sad.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Aided by your eight years in power.



**Mr. Hudak:** I know the member for St. Catharines is an honourable man and a statesman. I know he must be frustrated by all the broken promises. I know that in the cabinet room, behind closed doors, he is fighting for autistic children and their parents but has been forced to toe the party line, sitting in that cabinet seat.

One very interesting thing: In that encyclopedia of promises, there was not a single promise to restructure governance in the region of Peel; not a thing. Everything under the sun was promised by Dalton McGuinty to get into office, but he didn't say a word about restructuring. Am I right, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing? I believe I'm right. We've looked through the promises and have found no indication that he would restructure governance in the region of Peel or any other region. In fact, I believe Dalton McGuinty promised not to get into these types of restructuring decisions, in a general sense.

That was the run-up to all this during the campaign period: In trying to win votes, be everything to all people. Dalton McGuinty said nothing about this issue, did not commit to this as part of his campaign, did not commit that he was going to bring in Justice Adams; nothing of the kind. Suddenly, while in office, he twisted in the wind, backed down and changed his mind.

### 1930

But it didn't happen in a hurry. It wasn't like Dalton McGuinty said one day, "My goodness, I've got a plan for Peel region. I'm going to enact it because I believe strongly in it." It wasn't anything like that. In fact, if you look back to January 2004, Premier McGuinty stated very clearly that restructuring in Peel was not part of Dalton McGuinty's agenda. What is that, 16 months ago? Already into his mandate, the Premier said that Peel restructuring was not part of his agenda. God bless him. For once, it was consistent with his campaign platform. But when push came to shove, Dalton McGuinty again backed down.

In June 2004—I believe this was a letter; I don't have it in front of me, but I'm sure my colleagues across the floor will correct me if I'm wrong—Premier McGuinty said his government would not be making any restructuring changes in Peel. Once again, for a while it was consistent with his campaign promise that he would not be intervening in the Peel governance issues.

One month later, in July 2004, the Orangeville Banner and the Toronto Sun both reported that the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora, the finance minister, Greg Sorbara—who sometimes is the Deputy Premier and sometimes, people think, is the real Premier—confirmed that municipal restructuring is not on the government's agenda. In fact, he said, "It is not part of our agenda to become involved in municipal restructuring." If you're Brampton, if you're Caledon, if you're other municipalities, you figure, well, you have a couple of good cards in your hand, because both the Premier and the finance minister, the Deputy Premier, said that restructuring is not in the cards. You figure you're in a pretty

good position. But when it comes to Dalton McGuinty and his promises, don't make any bets.

In August 2004, the Toronto Star reported that the finance minister, Greg Sorbara, offered to provide a facilitator to work with Peel. The Star also characterized this as a sudden "about-face for the government."

So during the campaign, in opposition, then right through from January to July, it was not part of the agenda. Then Dalton McGuinty changes his mind, breaks his campaign promise, and in August 2004, the Toronto Star reported that the government had committed to providing a facilitator to work with Peel on the restructuring issue. So suddenly, despite denials, despite campaign promises to the contrary, it is on the table and a facilitator would be appointed.

A couple of months later, in October 2004, the Toronto Star reported that Justice George Adams had been hired to mediate a resolution to Peel restructuring. I have a great deal of respect for Justice Adams. If you have to hire a facilitator in Ontario for various issues, Justice Adams is highly recommended. I hope those in the audience had a good experience with Justice Adams. I certainly did, as a former minister in the government. Consumer and Business Services, for example, utilized Justice Adams in the funeral services business, in modernizing that legislation that was nearly a century old. I believe Justice Adams was respected by all parties involved. I think they felt they had a fair hearing with Justice Adams and looked forward to his report.

That was in October 2004. The Star added that Adams would try to find an "in-house solution," I guess meaning a consensus-based solution. Failing that, Adams's report would be delivered to the government, which would then decide on actions to be taken. Usually when you hire a facilitator, it's defined as a solution that's agreeable to all parties involved to try and find the right compromises. Then, if that is achieved, you act on that solution. Justice Adams certainly is one of the more respected facilitators in the province of Ontario. I believe that those constituent municipalities that participated in this had full expectation that Justice Adams's report would be implemented or that the status quo would be maintained.

In December 2004 Justice Adams reported. The Globe and Mail reported that he had recommended two more seats for Mississauga region, five more for Brampton, and Caledon would be the status quo. So in December 2004, the response was in the public realm via the Globe and Mail. Despite it being there, despite months and months of time and energy being taken up on this issue, Premier McGuinty sat on that report for at least three months. We had three more months of waiting, three more months of debate, three more months of energy that could have been put into improving regional services, waiting for Dalton McGuinty to make up his mind.

In February 2005, we were in receipt of a letter from a Caledon councillor about a conversation with Dalton McGuinty at a reception at Mr. Duncanson's house, who was a Liberal candidate in the riding of Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** He didn't do that well, did he?

**Mr. Hudak:** Regardless of how Mr. Duncanson did in the election, it must have been a good reception, because Premier McGuinty was feeling a little giddy, I guess, and said that he would abide by Justice Adams's report—this, coming from a Caledon councillor. Maybe I'll hear from the government that the Caledon councillor's report is inaccurate, but I think that if it takes a judgment between the word of Dalton McGuinty, who has broken 40-some promises, and a councillor from Caledon, I'm going to side with the councillor from Caledon, based on Dalton McGuinty's track record. So in February 2005, Premier McGuinty promises at this Bob Duncanson event to abide by Justice Adams's report.

In March 2005, my colleague the member from Brampton Centre, Mrs. Jeffrey, reaffirmed in the Brampton Guardian that the Liberal cabinet position is to do nothing unless all the mayors agree. That seemed to be consistent with Dalton McGuinty's second or third position. After he initially said he wouldn't get involved and there would be no restructuring, they seemed to say, "Well, maybe if there's a consensus." Brampton Centre is consistent with that, saying that there would be no changes in March 2005 unless all three mayors agree. Presumably that might be the Justice Adams report, if all three mayors agreed; if not, maybe status quo. But the member for Brampton Centre was confident in the Liberal cabinet position, and I believe she's right. In Dalton McGuinty's shifting of these issues, in his political gymnastics of flip-flopping all around this issue, I believe at the time, in March 2005, that Dalton McGuinty's position—his third or fourth position; it's almost like the Kama Sutra of positions on Peel restructuring, the number and varieties that Dalton McGuinty has taken on this. Dalton McGuinty and cabinet had decided not to get into restructuring, for all they had promised that, unless all three mayors agreed.

However, shortly thereafter, something happened; something transpired. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but in early April of this year, just a few weeks ago, according to the Toronto Star, Minister Gerretsen and the Premier, I guess in cabinet, decided to adopt yet another position on Peel restructuring and to take the esteemed Justice Adams's facilitation report that months of work had been spent on, and which had spent months sitting on Dalton McGuinty's desk, and they wrapped it up in a little paper ball and shot it into the basket—the work out the window.

**Mr. Dunlop:** How much did that cost?

**Mr. Hudak:** We don't know what the cost was. Maybe my colleagues across the floor can let me know what the cost of that was. I know that the whip is somebody who's very financially responsible, and he may know the cost of that.

Despite the work and Justice Adams's attempts to try and find a mediated solution, Dalton knew best. Dalton McGuinty said, "You know what? I know best, and I'm going to make my own solution." Never mind what

Brampton thought; never mind what Mississauga thought; never mind what Caledon thought; never mind what regional chair Kolb thought; never mind what Justice Adams thought; never mind what Brampton Centre thought. Dalton McGuinty suddenly, after a year and a half of adopting various positions, was sure that Dalton McGuinty had come to a miracle solution, the wisdom of Solomon, and said, "You know what? I've got my own answer: two seats for Mississauga, one for Brampton, and that's it."

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Is that something Mike Harris used to do?

**Mr. Hudak:** Quite the opposite. You know what? Whether it's Mike Harris, whether it's Bob Rae, it's hard to think of another political leader who has taken so many different positions in such a short time on an issue as Dalton McGuinty has done on Peel restructuring. It's like the Brampton Guardian said, "What it all comes down to is the indecisiveness and pandering of our Premier" of Ontario. After months of saying that it wasn't on the agenda, and then hiring Justice Adams, sitting on the report for months, all rolled up in a paper ball and tossed out, Dalton McGuinty had his miracle solution.

**1940**

This puts the member for Brampton Centre in a difficult position. I look forward to her remarks tonight and commend her, because she appears to be the first Liberal member of the government who is willing to vote against Dalton McGuinty, and I congratulate her for that, standing up for her constituents. It puts her in a difficult position, because I have no doubt, in March, she was assured that there was going to be a consensus-based approach, and Dalton McGuinty flip-flopped on the issue, leaving his member from Brampton Centre out in the cold.

I believe that Brampton Centre—and maybe she'll speak about it—heard from the Premier or the Premier's staff or a minister that that was the cabinet position at the time. She went out there, confident in that position, I believe; sticking to it. Then she found out that, yet again, Dalton McGuinty changed his mind and had a brand new idea, leaving his member from Brampton Centre out there.

It also puts the Minister of Finance in a curious position. We often jest that the Minister of Finance, the member for Vaughan–King–Aurora, is the real Premier. We often make that suggestion.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** No. You're wrong.

**Mr. Hudak:** Maybe I'm wrong. I certainly respect his authority. He's definitely a skilled politician; there's no doubt about it. Sometimes, when we look across the way and we can't see behind the cabinet doors, we think Greg Sorbara is the real Premier in the province. My colleagues are saying no.

You know what? I'm starting to believe you, because Greg Sorbara, the finance minister, like Brampton Centre, went out on a limb and told people there would be no restructuring in the region of Peel, and he was



wrong. Dalton McGuinty had his own idea. Dalton McGuinty had other plans. He didn't care what they said locally. Dalton knew best, the fifth or sixth time around. So not only has he left the member for Brampton Centre out in the cold, but he's having conflicts with his own finance minister. So you wonder how they make the decisions over there when they have members saying all kinds of different things about an issue of great importance to the region of Peel and to other regions across the province because of its implications.

I'm looking at my map here. There must be interesting conversations between the member for Brampton Centre and the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, because they sit together, right over there, side by side, the two of them. Again, I commend the member for Brampton Centre for sticking to her position and suggesting she will vote against this legislation.

What's surprising is, if Brampton Centre is sticking to the municipality's position, strongly vocalized through Her Worship and councillors from Brampton, why does the member for Brampton-Gore-Malton-Springdale similarly not come forward with a strong position? It's not like it was suddenly slipped on to the radar screen. Lord knows we've been talking about it in Peel region for some time, and the province, as I said, has been involved since back in—what?—June or so of 2004. If the local papers are consumed by it and the local councillors have a lot to say about it, surely the member for Brampton-Gore-Malton-Springdale must have an opinion of some kind, but he's not talking about it. He has gone silent.

I understand the member for—I'm not sure of the riding name exactly—Brampton West-Mississauga, Mr. Dhillon, and his wife are celebrating the arrival of a son. Am I correct in this? So I want to congratulate the member for that. It's certainly very exciting. I know he's a young member and he's starting out a young family, and I congratulate him for that. So, obviously some important things on his mind and that of his wife.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Hudak:** I didn't know I'd get this kind of heckling. I don't know if that falls within the realm of debate on Bill 186.

At any rate, I congratulate the member from Brampton and wish him and his wife and the new son, if I understand correctly, all the best for a healthy and prosperous life for the child. When that member is able to resume his duties, we'll look forward his opinion on Brampton restructuring as well.

It's very curious that the Dalton McGuinty government has taken so many different positions so often on this Brampton/Caledon/Mississauga restructuring issue in the region of Peel.

Let me talk a bit about Justice Adams. I mentioned that I had had the chance to work with Adams's recommendations when I was consumer minister. He was an Ontario Superior Court Justice, a law professor, an assistant Deputy Minister of Labour, chair of the Grievance Settlement Board of Ontario, vice-chair of the

Ontario Education Relations Commission. With that great background and his interpersonal skills, he started his own mediation consulting business and has been involved in a number of high-profile mediations, including dealing with double-hatters, Algoma and Stelco contract settlements and, as I mentioned, involved in funeral services and cemeteries work, which was a very challenging issue for those who followed it on the consumer side; somebody with a very esteemed background, no doubt hired because of that background and hired to be taken seriously. So it's shocking that the government would so cavalierly tear up Justice Adams's recommendations and throw them into the waste bin of history—I suggest, because Dalton McGuinty couldn't make a decision and stick to one approach to this issue.

Justice Adams was given a very serious mandate: to discuss with those involved in potential restructuring, or the services as a whole, in Peel region. His job, if I understand it correctly, was to try to develop a consensus among municipalities in Peel region, and if that wasn't possible, his report was to form the basis of any changes in regional government. When Justice Adams tabled his report, he had made nine different recommendations, but instead of following through with Justice Adams's advice, Dalton McGuinty and his brain trust decided to cherry-pick and only implement the recommendations that they wanted, and then to impose their own Dalton-knows-best solution.

This sort of erratic approach, this approach of saying one thing and doing another or this approach of somebody pushing hard enough that you back down, sadly has become characteristic of Dalton McGuinty's style of leadership.

You would have thought with the greenbelt legislation, for example, that the government would have worked very closely with municipalities and worked with their own maps to see which areas were already protected, should be protected, which areas were scheduled for growth. We found some very sad, sorry examples, because Dalton McGuinty and the minister ignored that approach. There was a junkyard that was part of the greenbelt; a cemetery; a waste disposal site. Our farmers in Niagara are talented cherry growers, peach growers, but they're not going to grow cherries and peaches in a graveyard or in a dump.

Strong allegations were made that if you went to the right fundraiser and you paid \$10,000 per plate, you might get your land exempted from the greenbelt. But if you were a small farmer in Niagara or Durham or Halton region or in Peel region, or in Brampton, as a matter of fact, who wanted to see why your land was included in the greenbelt or if other properties should have been included based on science: Shut out. Some, playing on this line, even brought phony \$10,000 cheques to Queen's Park to present to the Premier to make their point. If you were an average landowner in the greenbelt area, you didn't get the respect of being told you were there; no appeal mechanism except through the minister's office itself.

In another major betrayal to the people of Ontario: despite promising not to increase taxes, Dalton McGuinty increased taxes—maybe the largest tax increase in the history of the province. He looked into the cameras and he made a pledge to every taxpayer that he would not raise their taxes. Maybe beneath the TV screen he had his fingers crossed; maybe there was a little asterisk in there somewhere that I couldn't pick up without high-definition TV; I don't know, but it's clearly a broken promise.

Talking about balanced budgets, I don't think you have a hope, I really don't. I'll be shocked—

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** O ye of little faith.

**Mr. Hudak:** Maybe so. Maybe the member from Perth-Middlesex knows of another major tax increase coming up. Certainly Dalton McGuinty and Greg Sorbara did that in the last budget: tried to balance the books. Everything I've seen shows that we're back in those bad old days of runaway deficits, high spending and high taxation. There's no doubt about it: We're going to see a significant deficit.

1950

Not only did the finance minister promise, in Bill 186, that there would be no restructuring of Peel region; that very same finance minister said that the deficit this year was going to be \$2.2 billion. Then he was caught out by the Provincial Auditor and was forced to reveal some \$6-billion deficit for this past fiscal year, and I worry about what the next budget is going to contain.

Sadly, what has happened with respect to Peel region—the broken promises, the shifting of positions, taking actions contrary to campaign commitments—is perfectly consistent with Dalton McGuinty's behaviour while in office.

If this bill passes, basically what it will do is, the regional council in Peel will be made of up to 24 councillors plus the regional chair after the elections in 2006. If passed, Mississauga would have 12 of those seats, and Brampton and Caledon, between the two of them, would have the other 12. Brampton would have an additional seat to what it has today to recognize some of the growth that's taking place, although not what Justice Adams asked about future growth. Nonetheless, you would have a regional council in Peel that would be divided right down the middle on some issues: 12 votes in Mississauga; 12 in Brampton and Caledon. It does beg the question, will there be problems with a deadlocked Peel regional council down the road? Will this be more of a recipe for deadlock as opposed to trying to find compromises that all three municipalities could agree with?

As my friend from Durham region knows, if there is a tie in the vote, if that were to take place on some major issue, it would be up to the regional chair to block the vote. I do apologize to the minister; the parliamentary assistant gave some clarity on how the regional chair would be appointed in the future. Right now, the regional chair is elected by the members of Peel council. Chair

Kolb does not run for a regional seat and has been elected by the members of council to be the regional chair.

Some regions take different approaches, it's true. There are different models. Sometimes the chair runs region-wide. In Niagara, traditionally the chair has been a member of council and then that person's seat is backfilled. There are different approaches. In Peel region, the chair has been elected from outside of council. I think I'm right when it comes to this.

Considering that the regional chair, in a potentially deadlocked council, is going to play a major role in breaking ties—not necessarily a conciliator trying to bring sides together—brings up the spectre of a deadlocked council, which gives, really, a greatly enhanced potential role for the regional chair, who would become one of the most powerful politicians in the entire province of Ontario if there were a good number of deadlocked council decisions. Based on some of the history we've seen in the last little while, Premier McGuinty and Minister Gerretsen's propensity to exacerbate that division on council—their shifting of position, their dallying on the issue—I would argue, has exacerbated debates at regional council and has the likelihood of increasing deadlocks.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** Maybe Mississauga doesn't believe me, but I certainly have heard that. People have commented on this bill, a fear of a deadlocked council. We'll ask the gallery. Is there a concern? I'm seeing a lot of nodding heads. Mississauga looked down at his papers. Take my word for it, Mississauga, I say: There is a concern about a deadlocked council.

The regional chair will have to break those ties. What we don't fully understand, because the minister has not been clear—again, please correct me if I'm wrong—is what will happen if the vote for the regional chair is deadlocked. I don't think we have an answer for that quite yet.

Judging by the Premier's interest in manipulating council at the region, there certainly is concern in Peel region that the Premier may appoint a hand-picked individual. Maybe that's now allowed in legislation; I would like to know if I am wrong. There is a concern. I hope we'll hear this at hearings. I hope we will have hearings in this bill in Peel region. I would like an answer as to what happens if the vote for the regional chair is deadlocked. Does the Premier have the ability to appoint his hand-picked individual? If that's not the case, does the current chair stay in place until the tie is broken? If that's not the case, does the clerk play some kind of role? How is the tie broken? Unfortunately, I don't think they've thought this through, because I have not heard how the regional chair would be determined in the event of a deadlocked council.

Certainly that's a concern because of the increased debate on governance issues caused by Dalton McGuinty's interference and shifting positions on the Peel council issue. As far as we can see from the official opposition—the third party may know as well—we have



not seen an answer as to how the regional chair would be determined if there was a tie. I do worry that it might be one of Dalton McGuinty's hand-picked cronies. Who knows what they'll end up with? I have no doubt that in Peel region, they'd like to pick their own chair and not have one selected by the Premier and his cabinet.

Hopefully we'll have some answers on that. Maybe they'll allay the fears that exist in Peel region about a deadlocked council, but what I do fear is that Peel regional council, which had been a model of efficiency, will be turned into a model of Dalton McGuinty himself: deadlocked, dithering and unable to make a decision. Maybe the past will be proven wrong, but certainly they're laying the groundwork to cause further deadlocks and arguments over governance at council, as opposed to improving local services.

I think what really gets under our skin here in the opposition is the inconsistency between what Premier Dalton McGuinty says about an issue and what he actually does about an issue. We all know Dalton McGuinty's approach during the campaign was to say a lot of things to a lot of people to try to get elected. We do know that he didn't mention anything about Peel restructuring in his campaign documents, and we know that for his first 16 or 18 months in office, Dalton McGuinty, his Minister of Municipal Affairs and his finance minister all said that restructuring in Peel was not on the table.

We even know, according to the *Toronto Star*, what he committed to the mayor of Brampton, who has joined us here this evening. Here's a quote in the *Toronto Star*—I know my colleague has already mentioned this—from the mayor of Brampton: "This Premier gave me his word there would be no restructuring in Peel. This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that a Premier's word is gold, not coal."

Strong language from a mayor representing one of Ontario's most dynamic and growing communities, language I have no doubt Mayor Fennell did not use lightly, but which indicates a great deal of frustration with Dalton McGuinty's leadership or lack thereof on this issue.

2000

You have to wonder, too: If they're taking such an erratic approach on this issue of Peel restructuring, who knows what else is going to happen? Who knows what region is going to be next if Dalton McGuinty suddenly has another great idea that he's going to mess around with regional governance? If somebody pushes him hard enough or twists his arm enough, is Dalton McGuinty going to cave in? I come from Niagara region. Niagara region has a balance on council between the larger municipalities and the smaller municipalities. St. Catharines and Niagara Falls combined have about half of the region of Niagara's population.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, Minister.

**Mr. Hudak:** It's interesting to hear the minister heckling about amalgamations, what with his own broken promises on Kawartha Lakes. Talk about setting a tone as

Minister of Municipal Affairs. One of the first things he did was to sneak into Kawartha Lakes and say that the promise he made during the campaign wasn't going to be kept. Then you snuck out of there as fast you could, and I don't think you've been back. So I find it passing curious that the Minister of Municipal Affairs would heckle us about municipal restructuring when one of his first betrayals of the voters of Ontario took place in Kawartha Lakes. They made a promise there to win votes, but once they got in office, they tossed that promise into the waste bin, just like you tossed Justice Adams's mediation report into the waste bin.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** It does. It characterizes the Dalton McGuinty approach to municipal affairs that one of the very first things you did was break a promise with respect to Kawartha Lakes. It epitomizes it. It symbolizes it. One of the first promises that Dalton McGuinty broke was that he was going to stop 6,000 houses on the Oak Ridges moraine. "Come hell or high water, I'm going to stop 6,000 houses on the Oak Ridges moraine." What did he do when he got into office? He buried that promise beneath one of those very same 6,000 houses that Dalton McGuinty built on the Oak Ridges moraine. That promise was buried under the basement of those houses in the Oak Ridges moraine. The minister still remembers the giant chipmunks that chased him around.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. We have guests from a municipal council tonight, and I'm sure they don't hear this at their council meetings. Let's let the speaker get on with his business.

**Mr. Hudak:** The minister was talking a little bit about municipal restructuring, and one of the earliest broken promises was the broken promise on Kawartha Lakes. One of the early broken promises of Dalton McGuinty was basically to do a 180-degree turn on his promise about houses on the Oak Ridges moraine.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** But people talk about that. If you listed the hall of shame of Dalton McGuinty broken promises, the Oak Ridges moraine would probably come up in the top five to 10.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** You're right; breaking the promise on taxes, breaking the promise on balancing the budget and, if you're in Peel region, breaking the promise of not getting involved in the restructuring are going to be in Dalton McGuinty's hall of shame. But I'll tell you, for the average person, the broken promise to stop the housing on the Oak Ridges moraine is in Dalton McGuinty's hall of shame of broken promises, and the giant chipmunks will attest to that.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** You stole the chipmunks.

**Mr. Hudak:** The chipmunks felt betrayed. They said they wanted science behind the greenbelt decisions and they have yet to see that.

I'm getting a little off Bill 186, but I'm trying to show that unfortunately, when it comes to the municipal affairs

file, there are a lot of broken promises, and two of the highlights right out of the gate were Kawartha Lakes, the Oak Ridges moraine and now restructuring in Peel region.

If I am a regional chair or a regional politician in Niagara, Durham, Halton or Kitchener-Waterloo, I've got to wonder that if the right person whispers in the Premier's ear or twists his arm, who knows what's going to happen. In the region of Niagara, for example—and a couple of my colleagues are listening to my debate—St. Catharines and Niagara Falls combined have half the population. However, they have far less than half of the representation in the region of Niagara. I would suggest that when Darcy McKeough and Premier Davis were building regional governments in the early 1970s, they wanted to create that balance across municipalities and try to encourage planning across municipalities for the benefit of all constituent municipalities. So if you are from the regions of Niagara, Halton or Durham, when you see a bill like this moving forward that had no consensus, that rejected the facilitator's report, that has within it several broken promises, you must be concerned about when Dalton McGuinty is going to turn his eye to you and start giving you the broken promise treatment.

In fact, recently a municipal councillor in St. Catharines suggested that St. Catharines get more representation on Niagara regional government, fitting with the population. St. Catharines on its own has about a third of Niagara's population, roughly, but I think they have far less than a third of the seats. Maybe this councillor, encouraged by what Dalton McGuinty has done in Peel in betraying his campaign promises, is looking to turn the same trick in the region of Niagara. I know my colleagues from Niagara Centre and Niagara Falls would probably be concerned if St. Catharines had a lot more representation and the other municipalities did not.

No doubt it bothers us in the opposition considerably when Dalton McGuinty so blatantly breaks a promise and goes through such a tortuous dance over a year to all kinds of different positions. As I have said, it bothers the mayor of Brampton; it bothers the mayor of Caledon, who I think had, no doubt, believed the Premier when he told the mayor of Brampton that regional governance was not on his agenda. You know what may have happened? The Premier told one mayor one thing, another mayor another, the third mayor something entirely different, and maybe the regional chair got a fourth story. You don't think Dalton McGuinty would tell four stories? Maybe just three. But I think Dalton McGuinty is telling different stories to different people at different times. It certainly bears it out when you look at the media clippings on this issue and the different positions he has taken.

**Mr. Leal:** Tim, you're a good speaker.

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, thanks, and you only have to sit through 15 more minutes of this. But it bothers us, it bothers some of the mayors, and, I have no doubt, the regional councillors in Peel. It bothers our friend from Brampton Centre, the member Mrs. Jeffrey, who is

courageously saying she will stand up and vote against the legislation. You know what? I believe her. I believe she is going to withstand the strong-arm tactics of Don the Crusher guy and David—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, the health minister might be sicced on her.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** I think Guy Giorno has nothing on David MacNaughton and Don Guy.

**Mr. Leal:** Remember Toni Skarica?

**Mr. Hudak:** Well, maybe the member is calling on his partner to be more like Toni Skarica and step down if this bill goes through. I don't know if that is what Peterborough is saying. But if he uses Toni Skarica as an example, when Toni Skarica was upset with restructuring in the Hamilton area, he stepped down, he resigned his seat, and Mr. McMeekin entered the House in the resultant by-election. So maybe Peterborough is saying that.

But I believe that Mrs. Jeffrey, the member from Brampton Centre, will withstand the arm-twisting from Don the Crusher guy and from David—what was my nickname for David?

*Interjection:* MacNaughton.

**Mr. Hudak:** MacNaughton, but he had a nickname.

**Mr. Leal:** Who was in the backroom for Mr. Harris? Who were the backroom folks?

**Mr. Hudak:** The member from Peterborough is talking about the backroom folks. I heard that the vaunted and highly respected Polish Hammer from Port Colborne, Bob Lipinski, may be called in to speak with the member from Brampton Centre; certainly a very effective individual, a vivacious individual—Bob “the Hammer” Lipinski, from Port Colborne in my riding. He may be called in to speak with Mrs. Jeffrey, but I think she is going to stand her ground and vote with the people of Brampton against this bill.

I do find it curious that the other two Brampton members have been so quiet on a bill that has been a regular feature of the media, of discussion and certainly a prominent issue for municipal leaders from Brampton and from Peel region. The member Mr. Dhillon from Brampton West—Mississauga had a curious position. He said in the April 15 edition of the Brampton Guardian that he would like to see more of Justice Adams's report implemented. Justice Adams, a very respected, esteemed individual, had made nine recommendations, and the member from Brampton West—Mississauga said, “I would like to see more of Justice Adams's recommendations implemented.” Well, we heard from the minister. He's implementing eight of nine. That's what he says. What is the ninth of nine? Well, that was more seats for Caledon, not the model he's brought forward. So if Brampton West—Mississauga truly feels that more of Justice Adams's report should be implemented, he has no choice but to vote against this bill. If he wants nine of nine, if he wants better than eight of nine, if he wants more of Justice Adams implemented,



he has no choice but to stand in his place, stand on his word, and to vote against this bill.

Maybe, as I fear, he is trying to audition to be in cabinet and is exhibiting his talent of saying one thing and doing another. I do believe that if Brampton West—Mississauga wanted to prove his merits as a cabinet minister to Dalton McGuinty, he would say and do something else. But I don't think he is that kind of individual. If he says he wants to see more of Justice Adams implemented, he has no choice but to vote against this bill, because the government is committed to eight out of nine, and more would be nine out of nine, which is a different model for members on Peel council than the minister has brought forward. So that is Brampton West—Mississauga.

A more curious position comes from Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale representative, Mr. Kular.

2010

**Mr. Dunlop:** Where does he stand on anything?

**Mr. Hudak:** My friend from Simcoe asked where he stands on the issue. I have no doubt that Mrs. Jeffrey, who sits beside him, is working on him to stand up for his constituents from Brampton and also vote against this bill. But he had a very, very curious response. I don't know if my colleague from Peterborough saw it in the Brampton Guardian.

**Mr. Leal:** No, I just read the Examiner.

**Mr. Hudak:** OK. I don't know if the Peterborough Examiner reported on it, but in the Brampton Guardian story, the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale, Mr. Kular, basically said that he has written a secret letter to the Premier.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** You've seen that. I'm getting a reaction from the gallery.

He has written a secret letter to the Premier about where he stands on a very important issue in Peel region. The member has written a secret letter. I think it's terrible that his constituents, to find out where he stands, might have to go through the freedom of information process to FOI that letter, spend money on it, months to go through red tape, just to find out where the local member stands. Come on.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It's a secret. He wants it to be a secret between him and Dalton.

**Mr. Leal:** Toni Skarica sent a secret letter to the Premier—

**Mr. Hudak:** Toni Skarica told you where he stood on the issue.

The member for Brampton Centre says where she stands on the issue. My former colleague from Stoney Creek, Mr. Clark, said where he stood on the issue of Hamilton restructuring. They were brave. They stood on the issue, spoke their minds in the assembly and voted against the government, and Mrs. Jeffrey seems inclined to vote against her government on this. But how could the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale say with any kind of straight face that he has written a secret letter to the Premier, I assume describing his position, but

it's going to stay a secret? I can't rationalize that. Maybe Mr. MacNaughton and Mr. Guy have been working on him and they're going to keep that letter secret. But it can't stay a secret forever.

I do look forward and I do hope that all the members from Brampton—I know that one of the Mississauga members was speaking earlier—will pay the respect their constituents are due by standing in this assembly and telling us what they feel about the legislation and how they're going to vote. No secret letters, no telling the paper that it's all in a secret letter that will be revealed in the archives decades down the road; stand in the assembly and tell your constituents directly where you stand on this issue. I don't think that's asking for too much.

In Dalton McGuinty's list of promises, promise 152 and promise 160 said basically the same thing. In promise 152 and promise 160—I think you guys had to memorize these things—Dalton McGuinty promised Ontarians that MPPs would be free to criticize and vote against government legislation unless it was a campaign promise. Right?

This restructuring in Peel was not a campaign promise. We looked in that encyclopaedia of campaign promises and couldn't find it anywhere. So clearly, if Dalton McGuinty is a man of his word—and that is often in doubt—if he turns over a new leaf and wants to be a man of his word, there will be no repercussions for the members from Brampton for standing up for their constituents and voting against this bill.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Perhaps they'd like a secret vote.

**Mr. Hudak:** So the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale has no cause, no worry. If Dalton McGuinty is good for his word, that secret letter stating where he stands could be made public.

My friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke says that maybe they want a secret ballot vote. Well, that's not the way things work in the assembly. The constituents want to see those members from Brampton stand in the assembly and say where they stand on this issue and give constructive criticism on how to improve the bill.

The municipal affairs minister does have the right under legislation to work with municipalities, even to legislate changes in municipal structures. I would suggest that that right be exercised in an open, honest and transparent way, that if the minister and the Premier believed that restructuring in Peel region was the right thing to do, they could have at least campaigned on it or, while in office, said early on that that was the game plan and outlined a process that the mayors and councillors could buy into, have their say and there would be a fair, open and honest outcome.

Sadly, that is totally lacking. I have no doubt that, when other municipal leaders in regions other than Peel or counties other than Peel region look at this and see this haphazard, erratic approach, rife with broken promises, they're going to get nervous as to what is next on Dalton McGuinty's hit list.

If Dalton McGuinty felt this way, if his members from Mississauga were so convincing, he should have put it in his campaign platform, or at the very least outlined a process that had buy-in, that sought to achieve a consensus, and then acted upon it. This flip-flopping on the issue ultimately does more harm than good in terms of the municipalities' and municipal leaders' trust in their Premier and trust in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The signals that have been sent through this Peel restructuring issue, by Kawartha Lakes, where the Premier broke one of his campaign promises around amalgamation—Fort Erie, the municipality in which I was born and raised in the riding of Erie—Lincoln, wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing that they were not satisfied with Fort Erie's role in regional government and asked the minister if they could put on the ballot a question about governance in the region of Niagara and Fort Erie's role, as a local municipality, in that governance structure. Minister Gerretsen wrote back to the town with haste. It didn't take months, half a year and a series of different positions. Minister Gerretsen wrote back to the town of Fort Erie, to Mayor Redekop, and said, "The province doesn't get involved with these types of local decisions." The minister said, "Those types of representation issues on council's restructuring at the regions should be left to the region and the municipalities to work out a consensus" approach. That is what he told the town of Fort Erie. He made the same promises in Peel region, but he broke those promises. He did. He twisted, into several policy contortions, all kinds of promises and broke them.

What does that say to municipalities? Let alone what it says to municipal leaders in Peel region, what does it say to municipal leaders in Peterborough or Fort Erie or Halton region? The minister says, "One thing is good for you, but something else entirely different is good for other municipalities." What kind of signal does that inconsistency, that breaking of promises, send to other municipalities?

I mentioned a city councillor in St. Catharines already starting the ball rolling about restructuring in Niagara and getting St. Catharines more seats.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Hear, hear; a good idea.

**Mr. Hudak:** Maybe the Minister of Tourism likes that; he represents St. Catharines. But I tell you, I don't think those in Wainfleet, Pelham, Grimsby, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, West Lincoln and Lincoln are going to be too keen on that.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** It's good for St. Catharines.

**Mr. Hudak:** It's good for St. Catharines.

The question is, is this change under Bill 186 to governance in Peel region, this restructuring initiative, good for the municipalities in that area? It is taking up time in the Legislature. It is taking up time at Peel council, it's taking up time here in the Legislature, and I do hope we'll have a committee examine this thoroughly in Peel region. But there are other issues we look forward to discussing here at the provincial level: How will you balance the books? How will you get the ballooning

provincial deficit under control? How will you ensure that this new health tax actually results in improved health care services? My observation is that waiting lists for health care services are getting longer, not shorter. There's a seriously flawed greenbelt that seems to be based more on political science than on environmental science, a new municipal funding formula that takes \$47 million out of transfers to municipalities—

**Mr. Wilkinson:** So say the people who don't have grade 8 math.

**Mr. Hudak:** —as the member very well knows, hitting hardest in 2006, when municipal leaders will find out. I know the member for Perth—Middlesex is an intelligent individual who is often very careful to say, "It's for this year that we're giving a little extra money." He never talks about what he has done to Stratford councillors, never talks about what he has done to Perth, never talks about Middlesex, what those municipal councillors will have to go through in 2006. I think the member for Perth—Middlesex has been caught out; he's so anxious to get into cabinet, so anxious to get the keys to a cabinet member's limousine, that he has sold out Perth, has sold out Middlesex. He is not interested in defending the taxpayers of Stratford, who face increased taxes because of this municipal restructuring cost. He is more interested in getting into cabinet. That is his choice, but it's regrettable for Perth—Middlesex.

**2020**

I find Dalton McGuinty's leadership on this issue, Bill 186, highly regrettable. He has taken so many different policy positions on this and has broken his word. He has broken his word to mayors, to municipal councillors and regional councillors in Peel region. He says one thing and he does another, and he has no answers that I have heard about what will happen with a potentially deadlocked region of Peel. As I said, he has potentially turned what is one of the more efficient regions in the province into a model itself of Dalton McGuinty: indecisive, deadlocked and dithering.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Prue:** It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Erie—Lincoln. I may not always agree, but he says it very eloquently and he always has his facts.

He talked a lot—over the hour—about broken promises, and I think the biggest promise that has been broken here is the promise that the Premier made to Mayor Fennell of Brampton. I again quote what she had to say: "This Premier gave me his word there would be no restructuring in Peel.... This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that this Premier's word is gold, not coal."

This debate we're having tonight is a very unfortunate one, certainly not one that any of us in this room could have anticipated as little as two or three weeks ago, prior to it being introduced in this House. In fact, there were denials that anything was happening right until the day before. The telltale way that I always know that government legislation is coming, whether it be this



government or the previous government, is to open up the pages of the Toronto newspapers and see the leaked word two, three, or four days in advance of what the government is planning. That is, in fact, where this information comes from. They know it's a trial balloon. They want to judge reaction. I guess, from the reaction in the *Globe and Mail* and later in the *Toronto Star*, the minister felt it was safe to put his foot there and to go where he ought not to have gone.

I'll have much more to say about that in my hour, but I want to commend the member from Erie–Lincoln for at least having the courage to tell the truth the way he sees it.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I'm delighted to see all our guests who are here today. It's always interesting how brave certain members of the House are when Hazel McCallion isn't here to watch. If she's here sitting in the gallery, they're not nearly as brave as when she isn't. I've watched that over the years. It's just an observation I make: that the same speeches are not given when Hazel is up in the gallery as when she is not in the gallery. I'm not talking about the merits of the bill but just the style and the bravery of all members of the House when Hazel is in the House or not in the House.

I don't recall—maybe my friend Norm Sterling will tell me about this—that the municipal changes made in Victoria–Haliburton were in the Tory plans or platform. I don't recall that the city of Toronto was in the Conservative platform. I don't remember that being in the platform—not a lot of advertising.

I see that Guy Giorno, who ran the government, or at least the backrooms of the government, when the Conservatives were in power, now says it was a mistake to amalgamate Toronto. He was one of the strong members of the backroom at that time. I remember when so many people in the city of Toronto, from right across Metropolitan Toronto, made pleas to the government against amalgamation. Despite all those protestations, despite the petitions and so on, what we had, of course, was Toronto forced into amalgamation.

It is always interesting to hear a member of the former government say that somebody else is not fulfilling a commitment or a promise. One I remember so very well, and I know that my friend from Lanark–Carleton will also remember, was the Premier saying, "Certainly, Robert; I can guarantee you, it is not my plan to close hospitals," and over 30 hospitals closed in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Sterling:** I remember the 1987 platform of the Liberal government, promising new hospitals, and none were built.

At any rate, this bill is about Brampton, Peel, Mississauga and the town of Caledon. One of the things that is most distasteful about this bill is that the people sitting up there represent local and regional government. They have not had a debate on this issue. They have not had a debate on the Adams report. It has not yet been in front of Peel regional council. There has been no debate within their own local communities on the Adams report.

We have the Liberal government of Ontario dictating to the people of the region of Peel how their government is going to go forward—a government that has been pretty successful over the last 30 years. This structure has been in place for 30 years, and all of a sudden they're going to change the road map. They're going to give control to the city of Mississauga, because they're going to appoint 12 of 24 councillors who have already indicated that they are going to appoint the regional chair and carry the council. That's what this is all about.

I plead to the government: Stop this bill now. Let the regional council of Peel have their say on the Adams report. Report back to the government of Ontario and then go forward. When the local community has their opportunity to have public input, when the local politicians have their say about what they think their municipal government should do in the future, then you will have some legitimacy in terms of bringing legislation forward.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I've been watching this debate from my office while doing some work, and I think the government has to reflect a little. Two of the three municipalities are here with us tonight. They're obviously not happy with the decision the government has made. Simply put, Mr. Adams came forward with a recommendation that you didn't follow. You've institutionalized Mississauga always having a majority on the regional council of Peel. What the judge has recommended and what others are saying is that at this point it looks like the growth within the communities of Caledon and Brampton is rising to the point that their numbers on that regional council have to go up. I can't understand why the government would take a position, all of a sudden, that sides with one community and disregards what the hearings had to say with regard to Mr. Adams's process, that they would just go off and do it on their own.

I have to ask myself, who's afraid of Hazel McCallion? Is it the opposition or is it the government? It would seem to me that my good friend the Minister of Tourism has to ask himself the question. If anybody is afraid of Hazel McCallion around here, it sounds to me as if it's the Liberal government.

I'm just saying that there's a reality here. It's not that anybody said we should take away from Mississauga anything they're not entitled to, but we have to have a mechanism or a formula that says that, as the population grows in other regions, you have to show that in the makeup of the regional council. Can you imagine having a regional council in future where the majority of the population is represented by these two communities but Mississauga controls it? You can't give a community ad infinitum control at the end of the day. You have to do what the population says.

I would say that the best thing for you to do is either, at committee, to accept the recommendations that were made or withdraw this bill altogether.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Erie–Lincoln has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Hudak:** I thank my colleagues for their comments and again welcome Mayor Fennell, Mayor Morrison and representatives from across Peel region joining us here in the gallery this evening.

When Bill Davis created the region of Peel 32 years ago, it was done with a foundation that no municipality would dominate the votes. To change that structure is a fundamental change that should not be entered into lightly. But I believe that Dalton McGuinty, with no plan whatsoever to make it work, with no clue how to resolve deadlocks that are likely to occur, with no clear remedy to the real problem of who the next chair may be or how it will be appointed, entered into this while saying one thing to one mayor, something else to another mayor, something else to a third and something entirely different to the regional chair. Dalton McGuinty has at least four faces on this issue, four policy positions. It's a cowardice of leadership and an abandonment of the principles with which it was founded by Bill Davis 32 years ago, and epitomizes Dalton McGuinty's weak leadership and broken promises.

2030

I worry not only about what's going to happen to Peel region in the future—potentially deadlocked and indecisive like Dalton McGuinty—but also about the signal this sends to other municipalities across the province where Dalton McGuinty will not make a decision based on good policy. He will not make a decision on what is in the best interests in the region of Peel as a whole but makes a very, very black-and-white political decision based on the number of votes he thinks he is going to win. There's nothing about good policy, nothing about growth in the region and nothing about good government. It is a failure of leadership, and we look forward to voting against it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege again to stand and do the leadoff speech. Before I do so, I would like to thank you for taking my time slot here tonight, in part to allow me to make this speech. I know I helped you this afternoon, but I think you're doing me a bigger favour tonight.

There's so much stuff here. I pondered in my own mind, where do we begin? Where do we start talking about the events that have unfolded in the region of Peel? I think I had to start with an e-mail that was sent—I have a copy here—on July 6, 2004, from Emil Kolb, chair of the region of Peel, to the mayors and members of the regional council of the region of Peel. I would like to quote it in its full context, if I may, because I think this is where everybody's head was at nine months ago, including members of the government. It reads as follows:

"On Wednesday, June 30 at 6:30 p.m., I received a phone call from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty directly regarding the city of Mississauga's recommendation around governance restructuring.

"His message to me was clear and straightforward: The Premier and his government will not be making any restructuring changes in Peel. Premier McGuinty stated

that his government had not run on an agenda of municipal governance restructuring, and his energies are focused elsewhere—primarily on dealing with the \$6-billion provincial deficit and delivering on campaign commitments to enhance education, reduce waiting times for health care and champion clean power generation.

"The Premier stated that he had already told the mayor of Mississauga this message directly on Wednesday. Any further inquiries to the province on this or related matters will be referred to the office of Finance Minister Greg Sorbara.

"In my view, the province of Ontario has sent a clear signal to all local governments that it is committed to seeking partners who can deliver the best possible services and programs at the best value to the community. I am proud that the region of Peel is highly regarded by the Premier and his government as a valued partner.

"It is my hope that we can move forward from this point progressively to accomplish the many positive initiatives outlined in our strategic plan on behalf of Peel citizens." It's signed by Emil Kolb, the chairman.

Nine months ago that thought was conveyed, first of all to Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga, and secondly to the chairman of Peel, Emil Kolb, and through the chairman to the two other mayors and various members of the regional council. All was at peace in Peel; all was working in Peel. Peel continued to show how governance should happen in a mature and expanding economy. Peel has won awards for its governance. Peel appeared, on the face of it, to be acting in a very responsible and mature way, with all the bylaws that were before it and all the decisions of a financial nature that they had to make.

It was true that some people were unhappy. Some people were advocating for change, but that was not the direction of the regional municipality of Peel. That was one isolated mayor's position. And this Premier, nine months ago, said he wanted to have no part of it.

How did we get ourselves into the position we are in today, with two angry mayors sitting here watching the minister unveil his plan? How did we get to a whole turmoil and upset in two municipalities? How did we get half a million people riled up about what is happening here? How did we get a minister who in nine months has gone diametrically opposite to what his own Premier said he was going to do?

If you'll allow me to digress for a few minutes, I looked back to the roots of other government action and what happened in the great amalgamation fiascos of some seven or eight years ago. I ask you to look back to what happened there and you will see that, although this does not involve amalgamation, the exact same scenario is playing itself out over and over again.

In the period leading up to the amalgamation bill being filed in this chamber, not a word was said. Not a word was said during the Conservative election of 1995 that this was even on their agenda. No word was said from the cabinet meetings during the first two years that anything was being contemplated about amalgamation. In



fact, minister after minister after minister, including the one who represented me in what was then the Don Valley East riding, the Honourable Dave Johnson, said it wasn't in the cards. Town hall meetings were held at which it was said, "Amalgamation is not a threat. There are a couple of people advocating for it, but it is certainly not on the radar. It's not what we are going to do."

Then all of a sudden one day, I opened up the Toronto Sun. I don't often open it up, but someone drew my attention to a little, tiny article that said that an idea had been floated around cabinet and was going to be presented within a couple of days, that the province wanted to amalgamate the city of Toronto and all its six municipalities and its regional municipality into one big city. When the person showed that to me, I started to chuckle. After all, who could believe the comic book of journalism, especially a story that was that tiny, that had no facts, no data, no quotes but just "an unnamed source?" The next day there was a similar but much larger article in the Toronto Star, and the day after that in the Globe and Mail. All of a sudden, there was this whole preponderance of media attention being drawn to an idea that had never been on the radar screen before.

Toward the end of that same week, I was summoned, along with the other mayors of the six municipalities and the regional chair, to meet Minister Leach, as he was in those days. We sat in a boardroom in the minister's office, where he laid out to us for the first time that he had a plan. He had a plan that no one had ever heard of, a plan that had never been discussed, a plan that had no paper or background, a plan that had no rationale, but he had a plan. His plan was to amalgamate the six municipalities and the regional government into one big, giant megacity.

I remember getting quite heated and a little bit angry at such hubris, such pomposity that he had. It was unbelievable that he had no plan and no idea why he was doing it. I asked him on that day—I put it in negative terms, because he couldn't tell me why—was it because East York was not a good government? He said, "No, you're a very good government." I asked, was it because we were not democratic enough? He said, "If anything, you're too democratic." I asked whether it was because we had any financial hardships. He said, "No, you have no financial hardships." I asked him, was it because we had just paid down all the debt that had been amassed over a number of years, even though we were in a depression? He said, "No, you are to be commended for that." Then I asked, "Well, why are you doing it?" And do you know what his answer was? He shrugged his shoulders and he looked at me and said, "I don't know, but I've got to do something." That was the answer and that's how we got amalgamated, because he had to do something.

2040

I think this minister is doing the same thing. I look at this. There was no call on the radar. He got a couple of phone calls. An appointment of a learned judge was made. The learned judge gave him advice. He looked at

the advice and he didn't want to follow it, so what does he do? I don't know. He had to do something. The same thing is unfolding—exactly the same.

In the Conservative fiascos of amalgamation—and I say "fiascos" because all of them don't work.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Oh, you remember?

**Mr. Prue:** I remember all of them. Toronto doesn't work. Hamilton doesn't work. Ottawa doesn't work. Kawartha Lakes doesn't work. St. Catharines doesn't work. None of them works. They are all boondoggles. What happened with them, though, is that they used it at the same time to effect the downloading. They said, "You're getting a big municipality. We can now download. You're in a better position to pay." They used it to effect the downloading and to further cut taxes.

However, I'm not sure what the rationale is here. The learned judge has told you that the chief problem in Peel is not the restructuring or how many councillors are on the regional municipality or even where they come from. The chief problem is that this municipality, like every other one, has been downloaded. He wasn't given a mandate to look at it, but this is the problem. This is the problem that my friend and colleague with whom, as a former mayor, I sat on all the meetings and whom I like and admire but whom I am not afraid of, Hazel McCallion, has come to this government about and has talked about breaking away from Peel and has talked about restructuring. She is unhappy not about the governance; she is unhappy about the downloading she thinks has come to her municipality, the amounts of money they have to spend and the fact that she believes it's not financially tenable for her to stay there. It is a question not of politics but of finance.

When you get your head around that, you will understand what is happening here. This is a minister who feels he has to do something for no rational reason except perhaps one of finances. I'd like to get on to that in a minute.

You also have here a minister who has done some pretty bizarre things. One of them was Kawartha Lakes. He argued a little bit about what he should or should not have done and tried to blame the Conservatives for amalgamation—and they are to blame for amalgamation. But he is to blame for not de-amalgamating the city of Kawartha Lakes. The Conservatives, the New Democrats and the Liberals all gave their commitment to the people of that city, leading up to the municipal election the year before last, that whatever they decided in a democratic referendum we would carry out.

The people of Kawartha Lakes, knowing all the facts before them, knowing the costs of amalgamation, knowing the costs of de-amalgamation, knowing what would be split up and how it would be split up, democratically, in their wisdom, decided to split that town. They voted, not in a huge majority, but 52% voted to de-amalgamate. Well, I don't know where you come from, but in every election in this country, 52% means you win. I think it meant there too that the people who wanted to de-amalgamate should expect to win.

This minister decided unilaterally, again for no apparent reason—I guess because he has to do something—that he is not going to obey the democratic wishes of the people of that city. He has left them floundering with a structure that does not work for them. He has left them with an economic situation that is untenable. The taxes are going up there enormously. The number of people who sit on the council is not sufficient for people in rural areas. Some of them have to travel 90 to 100 kilometres to attend a local civic meeting. It is simply not a structure that works.

Last week we had a whole discussion about the Association of Municipalities of Ontario when the minister stood up and touted that they are now equal partners, that he is going to consult with them on every single aspect of municipalities. Well, if he was going to do that, why hasn't he consulted with them about this bill? Why hasn't he consulted with them about this unilateral and unfair action in which he has gone against the recommendations of his own judge, his own appointee? He has not consulted with AMO. He has not paid them any mind. I suggest that he has not even—and I'm going to deal with this a little later—followed the laws of the province of Ontario, which set out quite clearly in the Municipal Act how one facilitates the kind of change he has unilaterally done. He has not done anything in that regard to follow the Municipal Act of this province.

The mayors are justifiably mad—or angry; I shouldn't say they're mad; I should use the correct word. They are justifiably angry. I gave a couple of these quotations earlier, but I would like to give them again, just to show you how angry people can be.

The first one was March 31, Mayor Fennell to Minister Gerretsen:

"I would ask for your personal assurance, Mr. Minister—before our luncheon meeting on April 7, 2005—that your government does not intend to implement this rumoured Mississauga 2, Brampton 1 proposal. Moreover, I would like your personal assurance—again before our luncheon meeting on April 7, 2005—that your government has not given its approval to any alternative courses of action other than full implementation of Judge Adams's recommendations or maintaining the status quo for governance in the region of Peel."

The same mayor, same day, wrote to Premier McGuinty:

"Dear Mr. Premier: ....

"As you are also aware, Mr. Premier, Mayor Morrison and I formally objected in writing to the appointment of a provincial facilitator, urging your government to allow Peel's municipalities to develop a local solution within the purpose and intent of the Municipal Act—a public, transparent and open process prescribed in law. Your government chose to circumvent the provisions of the act and both Caledon and Brampton participated in the facilitation process under the direction of Judge Adams and we did so in good faith."

Let's go to another mayor. Let's go to the mayor of the town of Caledon. This is what she had to say when she wrote on April 12 to Premier Dalton McGuinty:

Dear Premier: ....

"The city of Brampton has made a very compelling argument that their representation should increase as their population grows. They are one of the fastest-developing cities in the nation. Given all that the parties have been through, Brampton deserves to have this issue addressed now"—she's underlined "now"—"in the proposed legislation and not at some future point in time. We simply cannot afford to be continually involved in future governance" issues.

She goes on to say, quite succinctly and correctly:

"Also, Justice Adams identified that the core problem is largely a financial one. Pooling of social service cost across the GTA has exacerbated the financial pressures within Peel. When this matter was brought forward to Minister Gerretsen last week, he indicated that he did not have a mandate to deal with the issue. This is why I am appealing to you directly. I gather Mayor Fennell has requested a meeting with you prior to the bill being introduced and I would strongly encourage you to meet with the parties. We must get this legislation right the first time."

That is what the mayors had to say. That would have been well and good, had they been the only people contemplating this, but I have here a letter from Minister Gerretsen to the town of Fort Erie, and what do you think he told them about breaking away? The opposite. This is what Minister Gerretsen writes to them, almost in the same week. March 4, 2005, Minister Gerretsen writes to Carolyn J. Kett, the town clerk of the town of Fort Erie:

"Dear Ms. Kett"—and this is a really good one, so I want you to pay attention to this little, tiny, short letter:

"Thank you for the opportunity to consider the proposal by the council of the town of Fort Erie to place a question on the next municipal election ballot pertaining to Fort Erie opting out of regional government. I have carefully reviewed the proposal.

"The provincial government's priorities are to strengthen the economy while improving health care for all Ontarians and outcomes for our students. Municipal restructuring is not one of our priorities. We do not support unilateral action on restructuring; we encourage the development of solutions that reflect the input of all affected municipalities.

"The government believes that the best decisions are those made locally and that a local solution can be found to make Niagara region work better for all constituents. I am confident that your local leadership can have constructive discussions with others at regional council leading to positive solutions on local governance and service delivery system issues within the current governance structure.

"John Gerretsen

"Minister."



2050

I find this appalling. I don't know about the rest of you. All of a sudden the room is silent. Usually I get heckled. I find this appalling because he treats the people in Brampton and Caledon in a much different way than he treats the people in Fort Erie. In Fort Erie, he's not willing to interfere. In Fort Erie, he believes regional government works. In Fort Erie, he says, "Sit down and discuss it among yourselves, and bring the changes you might suggest and we'll look at them." In Brampton, Caledon and Peel he unilaterally says, "I've made my own decision," notwithstanding what the learned justice had to say and notwithstanding the fact that this has never been dealt with in a parliamentary tradition in any of the three councils or in the regional municipality of Peel. It has never been there. It was never suggested by him that it go there. This is diametrically opposed. I do not believe a minister can have two different decisions on two similar municipalities. I know Fort Erie is a smaller town, but it's not significantly smaller than Caledon.

**Mr. Hudak:** It's 30,000.

**Mr. Prue:** It's 30,000. It's not significantly different from Caledon, and yet he would treat them diametrically opposite and differently. This shows, I think, the real lack of what is in this bill.

When I look at what the minister has done—he said I used harsh words, and perhaps I did. I try not to use harsh words in here, but I try to make my point as strongly, as passionately and as correctly as I can. I said I was very disappointed in his actions. I am disappointed not only because of the way he has treated this municipality, but I am disappointed in the way he treated Kawartha Lakes and I am disappointed because he treats Fort Erie in a different way yet again.

What has he done in this particular circumstance? The first thing he has done is that he has avoided every single semblance of transparency. There is nothing transparent about what went on here. There was a secret and huddled meeting where the mayors were called together, along with the regional chair and a judge, and they sat down for four days. There was no semblance of transparency, and he avoided every semblance of public participation. The public was not involved; the public was not informed; the public did not know what was going on. The public found out when it was too late. Shades of amalgamation in 1997. The same scenario: Keep it secret, do the dirty, announce it to the paper a couple of days early and see where things fall.

What else didn't he do? He didn't follow the legislation on regional restructuring. I point out to the government opposite, and I hope you have some lawyers listening, that you can find the answer for what you're trying to do with this bill within the confines of section 218 of the Municipal Act. Section 218 of the Municipal Act, an act that is only four years old at this point, sets out how a regional municipality is to be restructured. It's very similar to the advice he gave to the town of Fort Erie. You restructure it by coming toward the regional council, trying to make some consensus, talking among

yourselves and then seeking ministerial direction. That was not followed in this case. In fact, section 218 of the Municipal Act was completely abrogated.

Then we have the unilateral change he made versus the election. He completely changed everything he had promised in the election and everything he had promised in his letters and his phone calls to Emil Kolb, the regional chair, and in his many letters to mayors Fennell and Morrison.

The next point: He ignored the recommendations of the facilitator who was appointed by your own cabinet, who was the choice of the finance minister. In fact, the finance minister is quoted, as late as a couple of weeks ago, telling the various mayors not to worry, that this wasn't even on the radar. A couple of days later, sure it was. His own facilitator, the person he championed, said not to do what you are doing. Your government has chosen and this minister has chosen to ignore the recommendations of the facilitator.

The regional municipality cannot change unless it is authorized by the minister. I don't think there's any question about that. I would like to quote the Minister of Tourism's favourite mayor on what she had to say about this, because she was quite clear when she wrote the Minister of Finance. She knows where things get done around here. She wrote the Minister of Finance on September 9, 2004, and stated as follows:

"Sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act, 2001, set out the rules by which municipalities may change the composition of an upper-tier council, the types of changes that can be made and the procedures that must be followed to make these changes." End of first quote.

Second quote: "With regard to the issue of fair representation at regional council based on representation by population, the report adopted by the city of Mississauga council on May 31, 2004, respecting ward boundaries and the process required to redivide the wards and change the size of regional council acknowledges the process set out in sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act, 2001."

To quote Hazel again from the same letter: "In accordance with that timetable, input received from the initial distribution will be presented to city council by mid-October, following which the matter will be referred to the region and, in accordance with that procedure, regional council will be requested to pass the necessary resolution by mid-November 2004. The city of Mississauga has in fact taken the steps to meet the processes set out in sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as they relate to changing representation on regional council and has informed those impacted of this. This proposal has been presented in a clear and transparent fashion and will be subject to open ... debate in the matter set out in the legislation."

So whether you agree with Hazel's wanting to break away or not, she clearly is a person who understands the act. If only the minister understood the act. If only the minister followed the act as set out by Hazel McCallion, and if only he was as clear and direct and transparent as

that great mayor always is, because you always know where you stand with her, and if you don't know, you'll find out fast enough. From this minister we did not find out any such thing.

The residents got together. The residents are furious out there, you know. The residents, all of them, are furious. I have here the minutes from the council chambers in Brampton, fourth floor, a town hall meeting: "Governance in the Region of Peel." Lots of people were there. The mayor was there. Councillors were there. Ms. Linda Jeffrey was there. Mr. Vic Dhillon, MPP, Brampton West—Mississauga, was there. Staff were present, and a lot of prominent citizens. There were a lot of citizens there. There's a whole list of them here. Every single one that I can see who stood to speak was opposed to what was going on.

Let me get to the end, when some of the more prominent citizens were featured. Let's hear what they had to say, as recorded in the minutes.

First of all, there was the visiting mayor. Mayor Marolyn Morrison of the town of Caledon came forward and put down her comments. She thanked everyone, of course. She wanted them to know that she had attended four meetings with the facilitator and that "Mayor Fennell did an excellent job." She "advised that Caledon council concurs with the facilitator's report." She "indicated that, as she has stated many times before, elected representatives need to get on with the business they were elected to do—taking care of the residents of the region of Peel," and "expressed Caledon's support for the city of Brampton and indicated they will stand by Brampton on this issue as good neighbours do." That's what the mayor of the next municipality came to say.

2100

Mayor Fennell invited former Premier William Davis, a good representative of Brampton, to hear what he had to say about this fiasco of a bill. "William Davis, former Premier of Ontario, Main Street South, Brampton": It's good to see that he still lives in the same place he lived in when I was a boy. I guess he hasn't moved; good for him.

He "indicated that he didn't attend this meeting to speak; rather he came out to listen." But he "commended the mayor, council and staff on an excellent presentation-entation." He "advised that historically the rationale for regional government was the fundamental principle that no single municipality should have a dominant role in regional government." He "indicated that he believes the challenge facing the mayor and members of council is to convince the provincial government to either"—number one—"implement the facilitator's report or"—number two—"maintain the status quo." The former Premier, who lives in Brampton, did not like your third option, I would suggest to you, and in fact neither does anyone else. He "believes that ultimately the Premier will have the final decision on this issue and ... that consideration [should] be given to communicating this message more aggressively to the province." He said he wants to

continue living in Brampton, but he also wants to continue living as a member of the region of Peel.

Mr. Dhillon, MPP, was there. I don't want to say too much of what he said, because I really don't think he said anything. At the end he "offered assurances that he has listened to what has been said at this meeting and will take the message back and do everything he can to have a decision made soon." Well, you did that. You're having a decision made, literally within about a week of the introduction of the bill. Here we are at second reading, and we're going again on Wednesday. I would suggest that this is a hasty process I could never have possibly imagined.

Last but not least, Linda Jeffrey, the MPP for Brampton Centre, was there. It has been widely quoted in the newspaper that the member for Brampton Centre may have the dubious, although I think honourable, honour of being the first government member in this government, in this Parliament, to actually vote against a piece of legislation from her own government. It has not happened, Mr. Speaker. We have been here 19 months; there has not been a single member stand up to oppose a piece of government legislation. I hope and I wish Ms. Jeffrey, the member from Brampton Centre, all the best, because it will be very, very difficult, and many pressures will be brought to bear from the Premier's office and elsewhere to have her fall in line with this piece of legislation.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** If they bring in a social contract, I'll vote against it.

**Mr. Prue:** OK.

Things will happen, I am sure, but I think she is resolute, and I believe that because of what she had to say in the Brampton meeting. She "indicated that she had been working on this issue quite extensively." She "provided details on her discussions with the Premier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Minister of Finance with respect to this issue and advised that shortly after her election to Queen's Park she put forward the position to the Premier that governance was not an issue in Brampton." She "commented on the facilitation process and commended Brampton and Caledon on their presentations and participation in this process," and she "advised that she put forward her position on the facilitator's report to the Premier that all of the recommendations be implemented or none of them be implemented." It's not a good thing, I would suggest, as she did, to cherry-pick, pick those which facilitate and help the case that you're trying to build and reject the prominent one which in fact will not make what you're saying come to fruition.

The problem we're having here is that this government chose to ignore most of the recommendations of Justice Adams. Justice Adams wrote a short—it's only eight pages—but poignant and, I would suggest, brilliant little work here. He says a couple of things in this report—and I think all members should read it, especially all government members. There are three quotes that I want to lift from here, because what he is saying is not being followed in this legislation. What he is saying is



diametrically opposed to your government's actions on this issue. What he is saying would help the people of Peel, including the people of Mississauga, and you are bound and determined, I would take from this legislation, to help only the political cause of some of those who live in Mississauga.

He says, "Brampton, however, points to the tremendous distraction of being required to revise boundaries in 2006 to accommodate two additional ward representatives and then having to do that all over again in 2009 for the next three additional regional councillors...." If Brampton is required to wait until 2009 for additional representatives, its current councillors will be without help when most in need. In short, a formula approach to implementing representation which matches growth in population to representation with some precision is said to be not practical. Nevertheless, I also understand Mississauga's objection to the appointment of five additional regional Brampton representatives in 2006 without any qualification.

"Therefore, a solution to this dilemma is to add in 2006 two additional representatives for Mississauga and five additional representatives for Brampton, subject to an agreement between the three municipalities to commit to a weighted vote at the region in 2009 which accords additional weight to the votes of the councillors from Mississauga and Caledon to outweigh or compensate for three of Brampton's additional five representatives. In other words, the weighted vote would create the same effect as if Brampton had eight regional representatives, not 11." He goes on to explain how this is going to work, and it's very simple.

He talks about the process to come to this decision. This is found on page 7: "In other words, the area municipalities within any regional structure must have empathy for each other and work together whether or not one local body has a majority of votes at the regional level. The discussion over these four days of talks, albeit heated and even gut-wrenching at times, exhibited a remarkable capacity by the mayors to work together. The amazing achievements of Peel and Mississauga, for example, over the last 30 years, also confirmed the viability of the existing model provided it is kept current. Brampton and Caledon understand Mississauga's concerns that arise from it being Ontario's third-largest city and its well-deserved reputation for fiscal prudence."

I think what Justice Adams was trying to say was that the regional government in Peel is working. The mayors are three very tough mayors: all women, by coincidence—perhaps not by coincidence. Perhaps this is why it worked. Perhaps that's why the mayors of Caledon and Brampton, even though they were not anxious to go into this process, sat down with their colleagues and with Mayor McCallion and made it work. It was gut-wrenching, as he says. It was tough slugging, but in the end they came to what was a compromise that would work to the benefit of all three cities within the regional municipality of Peel.

Isn't that what sections 218 and 219 of the Municipal Act say is supposed to happen? Isn't that the way it's supposed to work: the negotiations are to take place, the discussion is to take place, the votes are to take place and then, if necessary, the province is supposed to come in and pass the amending legislation to allow for the changes in the regional voting structure? That's what these three mayors have recommended. That's what the judge recommended. The judge was very clear in saying that the weighted votes in Brampton would be allowed, to allow that the municipality, as it gets increased numbers of citizens living within its boundaries, would have increasing influence. They would not have that increasing influence until at least 2009, when those changes take place.

One only has to drive north and west of the city to see the subdivisions, the apartments and the commerce that is flowing into Brampton. It surely and clearly is one of Canada's fastest-growing cities. The justice recognized this. The mayors recognized this. The demographers recognized this. Everybody recognizes this except for Minister Gerretsen, who says that he is not willing to look into the future. He's only willing, quite frankly, to look into the past. He's willing to look and see what the 2001 census accorded Brampton, not what the 2011 census is likely to do. It is in 2011 that this whole thing will fall apart, if it hasn't fallen apart already. This will exacerbate it; this will make it worse. This will, in combination with the downloading, make the regional municipality of Peel different from what it is today. Today it is a model. Today it is a city and a regional municipality that people come from all over the world, I'm sure, to study.

2110

I remember when I was on the regional municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. It seemed to me that every single night, certainly every single meeting, there were people from all over the world who came to study the regional municipality that worked, where six mayors and 21 regionally elected members—27 in total, plus the chair—all sat down and decided on what was best. Was it parochial? I don't think so. As a mayor of East York, was I parochial about only the things that happened in East York? I don't think so, nor do I think that was true of the mayors of Etobicoke, North York, Toronto, Scarborough or the city of York. It was not a parochial function, any more than I believe that the regional municipality of Peel will sometime break down into its own parochial nature. In fact, the exact opposite has been the case.

I draw your attention to this, if you have one; I don't know whether you do. I'm sure my colleague from Brampton Centre will refer to this in her most eloquent speech on Wednesday, which I'm waiting for. There have been 6,000 votes taken at the Peel regional council in the last 10 years. Of that 6,000, only 93 have been recorded—so we only have the proof of 93 where someone asked to have their vote recorded—and that is 1.5% of all regional votes. In all that period, only two instances of bloc voting took place. One saw Brampton

and Caledon vote together to defeat Mississauga, and the other saw Caledon and Mississauga vote together to defeat Brampton: two votes in 10 years. This is all about this stuff. This is not a problem. You are creating a problem where none exists. You are weighting Mississauga to have extra votes, weighting Mississauga to have half of all the votes, and that is where the problem is going to happen.

I don't know why this government would do this; I haven't the slightest clue. The problem, as I started with, is a financial problem. The problem with all the cities and towns in this province is that they don't get enough money. They do not have enough money, save and except in fast-booming economies. I won't purport to speak for Brampton about whether they have enough money. I guess you never have enough. In boom times, I remember going out to Mississauga, and Mississauga didn't have to raise the taxes for years and years. Hazel was very proud of that, justifiably; she should be. The reason they didn't have to raise the taxes was that new taxes were being created all the time. There was a boom in housing, there was a boom in commerce, there was a boom in factories, there was a boom in the drug industry. It was all being built on virgin farmland. Money was to be made with the new assessments. They rolled merrily along until a couple of years ago, and then we saw what happened to Mississauga.

Mississauga, now being a mature and largely built-out area, no longer has the luxury of these new additional revenues coming in each and every year from housing, from building, so they have unfortunately fallen into the same kind of economic circumstances as all the other large municipal governments in this province. They have the same problem as Toronto or Hamilton or London or Ottawa or Windsor. They have the same problem. Pick the top 10 and they all have the same problem. There isn't room to expand, and once they have expanded and have moved out, then without the economy itself growing, they are forced to go back to their ratepayers and back to their businesses to ask for more money.

The problem happened—and here's where I go back on the Conservatives again—with the downloading exercises of 1996, 1997 and 1998. The municipalities were downloaded to the point where it is singularly impossible for them to pay all the monies they need to pay to keep their municipalities going without running back to the taxpayers for the most regressive form of taxation of all, and that is the property tax on the ratepayers. It is regressive because it's not based on your ability to pay; it's based on the size of your house, how much it is worth, what the mill rate is in the town and how much the municipality needs. You can be a retired person or a person who has recently lost their employment or a person who has recently arrived in Canada and whose entire savings went into buying a house but who has no job, and all those people will pay the same taxes as a multimillionaire if their house is identical or nearly identical. It is a regressive form of

taxation that desperately needs looking at, but I will leave that for another day.

The municipalities have been downloaded. In Peel, they got a double whammy. In Peel, they have the good fortune—or, some would say, the misfortune—of living next to Toronto. In Toronto, the social welfare, all of the social experiment that goes on in this magnificent city, costs money. When the province downloaded a large portion of that responsibility to the municipality, they got howls and howls of rage from Toronto. We argued, and successfully—I was one of the “we” then—that we couldn't afford it, that it was unfair, that it was not meant that this money should come from the property taxpayer. It was not fair that the costs for welfare, for social programs, for daycare, for all of those socially necessary things that happen in the city of Toronto and in municipalities across the province should be borne by the taxpayers of Toronto alone, because we were a regional centre.

If someone was unemployed, a lot of them came to Toronto. If someone was looking for social housing, they came to Toronto. If they needed specialized services through the provincial government, its agencies or its NGOs, they came to Toronto. If they needed specialized medicine, the best hospitals were in Toronto. People come to this region for a lot of very poignant and important reasons. It was beyond the ability of the taxpayers of this city to pay for all that, and therefore the Conservatives, in their wisdom, said, “You're right.” It was the first time they ever said we were right, but we were. They decided then that they were going to get money from other municipalities. Well, they downloaded again on Peel. They downloaded again on York and on Durham. They said, “Large portions of the money you raise from your local taxpayers will be funnelled down to Toronto to pay for social programs.”

Judge Adams had a little bit to say about that. It's pretty good; it's on page 6. Judge Adams says: “The relatively stable municipal property tax is not the appropriate revenue source for program costs which fluctuate with the provincial and national economy. Strikingly, Ontario continues as the only province to require municipalities to contribute towards social assistance”—the only one.

If you wonder about the problems that Mayor McCallion is having in Mississauga, it's because there isn't the money she once had. She is the head of a mature city that has built out to its borders. There isn't much chance of anything else happening except going up, if she wants to start building large condominiums, which in fact is what is happening in downtown Mississauga today. Even as we speak, I'm sure the cranes are still operating and the workers are putting up brick. I'm sure that is happening; that continues apace. But there isn't enough money. Then she and the other mayors see what is happening to their money: \$60 million flows down to the city of Toronto to pay for social costs, a phenomenon that does not occur in Montreal or Vancouver or Halifax or Winnipeg or any other large city in this country that



also has the same problems. They all have people flowing into the city for a variety of social or health or cultural reasons, people who often do not have sufficient money and who are looking for housing or a plethora of other government-funded initiatives.

They can't continue, and that's what caused the fight. Instead of the minister looking to remedy what is wrong—and what is wrong is the funding formula for the cities; what is wrong is that we are asking more from the cities than they are able to do; what is wrong is to continue the download of the previous government as if it didn't happen at all. The members opposite, when they were on this side of the House—and I remember, because I sat over there and they were all sitting here—fought long and hard and vociferously to try to end the download. Now that you're in government, you tinker around the edges. The minister is tinkering around the edges and actually creating harm, I would suggest, to the people of Peel. I'd like, Mr. Speaker, with your permission, to get on to what some of that harm is.

**2120**

Harm: Number one, they have set the stage for further conflict, because the bar has now been set. The minister himself said here tonight that when Brampton's population goes up, the changes will be made. The next mini-census will happen in 2006—next year. What if the mini-census shows that there are 100,000 more people in Brampton—which it probably will—since the last one? Does that mean the bar has changed? Does that mean Brampton is going to get—I'm sure they're going to be running down here for extra representatives, and there's no plan. Is the mayor of Mississauga, whoever that person might be—and I hope Hazel is the mayor till she's 100; if anyone deserves it, she deserves it—going to turn around and say, "No, we just inked a deal last year"? That's exactly what I think is going to happen. There is going to be further and further conflict, because this government, on this issue and perhaps on others as well, has no plan.

Justice Adams gave a perfectly rational plan here. Justice Adams was giving the extra members, but was waiting for them until the year 2009. This allowed for them to be there, to understand and to contribute, but not to vote until 2009, when they would become fully functional. This would give some four years for the current regional government to suss it out, to figure it out, to understand it, and in the elections of 2009 they would have a new and, I would suggest, more rational plan to follow.

It is quite clear that Justice Adams could see from the reports, from the demography, from the building boom, from everything that is happening, that Brampton is increasing by leaps and bounds, both in terms of its pecuniary assets and the number of people who live there. Instead, this minister has preferred, for some unfathomable reason—and I go back to Mr. Leach—to say, "I have to do something." He doesn't know why; he just feels that he has to do something. He is following in

the worst traditions of former Minister Leach and former Premier Harris.

I have no idea. He is following the traditions of not being democratic, of not being transparent, of not listening, of ignoring expert advice and just doing it because he can. That's what I see here: a minister doing this because he can; not because he needs to, not because he has to, not because he's being forced to, but simply because he can. There is no rationale that I heard here tonight, either from him or from his parliamentary assistant, the member from Scarborough Centre, that in any way makes sense to me.

I ask you as well to think about a scenario. Everyone will say this can't happen. I know the government side is going to say it can't happen. But suppose you push this bill through. Suppose you have the votes to do it and this passes second reading. It goes to committee and you listen to 500 people tell you what a bad idea it is, but you do it anyway. Suppose all of that happens. Suppose it comes back for third reading and it passes, and the Lieutenant Governor is called down and signs it into law. You're then going to have 12 representatives from Mississauga, seven from Brampton and five from Caledon, and you are going to have what is called a hung jury.

If it has never been tied up before, it's because it was collegial. It was never tied up before because they never saw themselves as people bound to a certain municipality, looking out for the interests of their own individual municipality. But I will tell you that, with the minister's actions, all of that is going to change. People from Mississauga are going to say, "I'm from Mississauga," people from Brampton are going to say, "I'm from Brampton," and people from Caledon, by heck, are going to say, "I'm from Caledon," and you're going to see regional and voting blocs that never existed before and should not exist now. That is what you've done here. And when that happens, and I can see it now, whether it's 2006 or 2009 or 2012, whatever the year is when the vote takes place for a regional chair, it's going to be a tie vote; it's going to be 12-12. And what happens then? Your bill doesn't deal with it at all. Your bill does not contemplate what happens with a 12-12 vote. The only thing that is going to happen—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Prue:**—and Mr. Duguid has figured it out; good for you—is that they'll do what every other municipality does. Every other municipality that has a hung vote does the same thing: They come back for appointment to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. You come back to the cabinet, and the cabinet of the day, whoever that might be, chooses your regional representative. Isn't that great? Isn't that great for democracy? You polarize the situation, and then you come back to cabinet and cabinet saves the day by picking one side versus the other, one appointee versus the other, or a third one who wasn't even contemplated for the job when it began. That's what this says.

Section 3 of your bill actually sets this out. Section 3, for those who may have read it, or chose to not read it, says, "Nothing in section 1 limits the power of the regional municipality to change the composition of its council under section 218 of the Municipal Act, 2001 for any regular election after 2006, if the necessary regulation were made under subsection 218(6) of that act."

What does that mean for the people here? What does it mean for the people of the three municipalities in the regional municipality of Peel? It's pretty simple what it means. It means that in the future they are going to require a triple majority. They'll have to have a majority of each of the cities; they'll have to have a majority on Peel council. You are hamstringing them by this very bill. You are making it impossible for this mature, vibrant regional municipality to continue to exist. If your plan is to destroy it, then you're doing a good job. I didn't see that this was your plan at the outset. I don't know whether somebody has a Machiavellian chess sense, where they can see 10 or 15 moves in advance. But if you do, this is precisely where you are headed. You are asking for a triple majority; you are asking to make it almost literally impossible. The people of this regional municipality, once you do the deed in this bill, will not have an opportunity for 20 years, mark me, to change how their regional municipality works.

I can see it now. I can see several scenarios: One, if I'm government, I'll undo all of this; two, if you're government again, you'll say, "You know, we made a mistake, but let's look at it some more. We promise not to interfere in this municipality for a while, but maybe another one." Or if they're in government, who knows? They'll download some more stuff on them. But in any event, two out of three scenarios look pretty sad.

For those people who are here tonight, I commend them for sitting through what has probably been a pretty difficult two and a half hours for them, to hear the minister say what he had to say; to hear the parliamentary assistant and some of the people, in comment, say what they had to say about this particular bill; to listen to how you believe you have done everything right, although

you've done everything contrary to the laws of this province, the laws that have been promulgated and in place for many, many years; to say that you consulted when they know you didn't consult; to say that you are transparent and open with citizens when you have not been. That is what they are seeing here tonight.

I am asking the members to listen very carefully, not just to me because I'm in opposition—and I know you very seldom do that, even when I speak wisely and sagely, I've been told. It doesn't really matter, because your minds are made up. But I'm asking you on this bill not to have your minds made up. I'm asking you to listen also to what the member from Brampton Centre is going to say. She is the one who is going to bear the brunt of this. She is the one who is at the heartbeat of it. She is there. She knows what the issue is. Listen to Finance Minister Sorbara, who just two weeks ago said that this wasn't even on the radar. He is the same one, if you go back to Emil Kolb, whom I quoted earlier, who was in charge of this whole thing at the beginning. Do not listen to the machinations of the minister. On this issue, as in Kawartha Lakes, he is very clearly wrong.

We have an obligation to all the people of this province, but especially to the people in the affected municipalities, to do the right thing. The right thing is very simple: You either make all the changes that the learned justice put forward and plan for the future, or you make no changes at all. Even if no changes are made, the municipalities and the people who live there will be better off than with what you're doing.

It is often said that you oppose legislation if it's wrong, but if it doesn't hurt anyone then it doesn't matter; you can feel free to go with it. But this does hurt a number of Ontarians very deeply. They have come out in huge numbers in Brampton to voice their concerns. A number of them are here tonight and have stayed till nearly 9:30 to listen. I think you need to listen to them.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 9:30 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, Tuesday, April 26.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*



## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉ PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

### **Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

### **Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

### **General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

### **Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Orazietti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

### **Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

### **Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

### **Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

### **Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

### **Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

## CONTENTS

**Monday 25 April 2005**

### SECOND READINGS

**Regional Municipality of Peel Act,  
2005, Bill 186, *Mr. Gerretsen***

Mr. Gerretsen .....	6539, 6543
Mr. Duguid .....	6540
Mr. Dunlop .....	6542
Mr. Prue .....	6542, 6552, 6554
Mr. Delaney .....	6543
Mr. Sterling .....	6543, 6553
Mr. Hudak .....	6543, 6554
Mr. Bradley .....	6553
Mr. Bisson .....	6553
Debate deemed adjourned .....	6562

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Lundi 25 avril 2005**

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 2005 sur la municipalité  
régionale de Peel, projet de loi 186,  
*M. Gerretsen***

Débat présumé ajourné .....	6562
-----------------------------	------

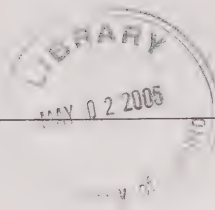




No. 135A

N° 135A

ISSN 1180-2987



**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 26 April 2005**

**Mardi 26 avril 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 April 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 avril 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** My constituents want some answers from the Minister of Energy. The Ontario Power Authority, which reports to the minister, has identified northern York region as an area where demand for electricity will soon exceed the capacity of existing facilities.

The power authority recently announced through an ad in my local paper that they would be holding a public meeting to find out what the public thinks about the issue. So where are they holding this public meeting? At Highways 7 and 404. This means that a public meeting to discuss the energy supply in northern York region is being held almost as far south in York region as you can go. The OPA seems not to want to go any further north into York region than the first exit from the 404 north of Toronto.

This is not proper consultation. Constituents in my riding of York North, which is northern York region, deserve to have their voices heard. Minister, the Ontario Power Authority reports to you. Tell them to come up to my riding and start listening to the people who are actually affected by their plans.

#### ORAL HEALTH MONTH

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** About 30 minutes ago, after eating a very good but messy falafel for lunch, I brushed my teeth, as much out of sensitivity for my colleagues, who will spend the rest of the evening here with me, as for pure dental hygiene. Nevertheless, I brushed my teeth and, judging by your smile today, Mr. Speaker, I know you brushed your teeth as well, as you always do. I point that out because the month of April has been declared Oral Health Month in the city of Toronto.

This is the fifth year that the Toronto Academy of Dentistry has worked with the Rotary Club of Toronto-Don Mills to organize Brush-a-Mania. Each year, an Ontario Dental Association member dentist and a Rotarian have gone to a local elementary school to speak to students about oral hygiene. All students who record each time they brush their teeth for three minutes over the month of April will receive a Brush-a-Mania club mem-

ber's certificate, stickers and sugarless gum upon completion.

This year, over 120 schools and 3,500 students will be participating. With your support, through displaying posters in your offices or in government buildings, speaking to your local school principal or attending school events, we can all ensure that the children of Toronto will find a fun and easy way to maintain the health of their teeth and learn and adopt healthy lifestyle choices. On Friday morning I'll be attending, with students at St. Rose of Lima Catholic School and students at St. Barbara Catholic School, a discussion on dental hygiene with local dentists to emphasize the importance of brushing your teeth.

I thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage all members to get out to their schools and do the same.

#### NASCAR

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I rise in the House today, now that the Minister of Tourism is here, to mention plans underway to bring NASCAR series events to the Mosport International Raceway in my riding.

As some members will know, Mosport has been Canada's home of motorsport for more than 40 years. Racing legends Stirling Moss, Gilles Villeneuve and Bruce McLaren and stock car racing king Richard Petty have been among the competitors at this circuit. Most recently, president and general manager Myles Brandt and his team have seen crowds increase by 10% to 15% annually in the American Le Mans series. Over the last three Labour Day weekends, over 70,000 fans were in attendance.

A Canadian NASCAR event at Mosport would be an important contribution to Ontario's tourism economy. This event would promote our province around the world. The region of Durham has unanimously endorsed Mosport as the preferred Canadian site for the NASCAR series expansion.

On behalf of Clarington mayor John Mutton, Clarington regional councillors Jim Schell and Charlie Trim, Oshawa city council and all the local elected officials, I would like to bring this NASCAR opportunity to the attention of the House. I respectfully ask that the province of Ontario support the Mosport NASCAR bid. I will be following up with further inquiries of the appropriate ministers, Minister Bradley being one.

Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to bring this important issue to the attention of the House today.

## SMOKING BAN

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** As the government of Ontario moves swiftly toward making all public places in this province smoke-free, I'm pleased to announce that as of 05/05/05—that is, May 5, 2005—the Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga will no longer allow smoking anywhere on the hospital grounds. Smoking will be banned on the entire hospital grounds, including the parking garages and all outdoor spaces on the hospital property. The hospital is calling this initiative Operation Butt Out!

Banning smoking everywhere on the hospital property will send a clear message to staff, patients and the community that the prevention of cancer, lung disease, respiratory problems and other tobacco-related serious illness is as important as treatment. I commend the Credit Valley Hospital, its board, its management and its staff for taking this initiative for the health and well-being of their patients, families, staff, physicians and volunteers.

Smoking causes cancer. Credit Valley Hospital's new state-of-the-art regional cancer centre will be devoted to the treatment, research and ultimate eradication of cancer. It will open on the very day that tobacco use is prohibited on hospital grounds. I heartily endorse the Credit Valley Hospital's initiative, and I extend my congratulations.

## NIAGARA REGION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** As a Niagara MPP, I'm very pleased and proud to welcome Niagara region chairman Peter Partington, a former member of this assembly, and various mayors and business leaders, including Patrick Gedge from NETCorp., to the assembly today. Welcome, gentlemen.

I know they've had an opportunity to meet with members of all three caucuses, and are here to speak with one voice on issues of great importance to the people of Niagara. We are proud of our wineries and proud of the Niagara Falls tourism areas, but we're more than simply wineries and the falls. We're a community that needs greater investment in infrastructure, particularly to attract industrial jobs—good manufacturing jobs that have fled the region recently—to our area.

1340

The greenbelt, for example, as members well know from the debate in the House, will effectively freeze growth in northern Niagara, making the needed investments in the 406 south and the mid-peninsula corridor all that much more important—what the region calls their grow south initiative—to encourage growth down through Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne, into southern and western Niagara. The region will say that without action and investment, Niagara faces a grim prospect after the greenbelt of a limit of only 1% growth over the next 30 years. So I call on the government to move forward with these initiatives.

I remind the members to enjoy some of the VQA wine and good food at the reception in room 228 beginning at 4:30 this afternoon, and hope that we'll see you there.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm pleased to join my Niagara colleagues here at Queen's Park in welcoming municipal leaders, elected officials from across regional Niagara. I know that if Jim Bradley were able to make a member's statement, he'd be on his feet as well saying much the same thing, but he'd far sooner be the minister—a small price to pay.

I want to reinforce the message that these people are bringing to Queen's Park, and that is, first, that Niagara has strong leadership; second, that it is speaking with one unified voice around issues that are relevant to what takes place here at Queen's Park. I appreciate, on their behalf and on behalf of the folks in Niagara, the audiences that were granted to them by any number of ministers and civil servants here at Queen's Park.

I join in calling for a prompt, speedy four-laning of Highway 406 and its extension down to Port Colborne. That's going to do a heck of a lot more to promote the greenbelt and save tender fruit land than any legislated scheme ever will. It's also going to do a whole lot to improve the congestion on the QEW right at the Niagara Falls area because, of course, a whole lot of the border traffic is going to be diverted using the 406 after they get off Highway 3. That's smart planning, that's true smart growth, and I encourage the Minister of Transportation to take that issue on handily.

I look forward to joining members of the assembly later today when these officials here, including Mayor Damian Goulbourne from Welland, Councillor Bobby Gabriel from Thorold, Councillor Brian Baty from Pelham and others, of course Debbie Zimmerman—

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Mike Collins.

**Mr. Kormos:** —and Mike Collins from St. Catharines, ready to greet us.

CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDFONDS SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE  
MUNICIPALE RURALE  
CANADA-ONTARIO

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Il m'a fait plaisir d'être à Vankleek Hill dans le canton de Champlain hier pour annoncer une importante source de financement pour les municipalités rurales de l'est de l'Ontario.

I was honoured to be in the township of Champlain yesterday to announce, along with our federal and municipal partners, important new funding for eastern Ontario municipalities through phase 1 of the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, better known as COMRIF.

The announcement represents over \$11 million for my riding, as well as \$370 million of investment province-wide. This significant commitment shows our government's willingness to work with local and federal partners to restore infrastructure in rural Ontario that was so



neglected and underfunded by the previous Harris-Eves government.

The township of Champlain, where the announcement took place, has received approval for \$8.3 million for the construction of the L'Original waste water treatment plant. Other municipalities in my riding were also successful in their COMRIF applications. The township of South Glengarry received approval for up to \$1.6 million to reconstruct Tyotown Road in Lancaster, and the united counties of Prescott and Russell have received approval for almost \$1.4 million to repair the Henri Séguin bridge on County Road 9.

I look forward to COMRIF's second phase, of which our government will unveil details within the next few weeks.

### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I believe it's the obligation of all members in this House to assist other members in fulfilling their obligations. One of these responsibilities is to report accurate information to the media and, hence, to the public.

The leader of the official opposition, Mr. Tory, was in my riding last Thursday and made a speech clearly flawed by inaccurate information given to him by his research staff. According to the Belleville Intelligencer, Mr. Tory stated in Picton that municipalities in my riding will receive \$1 million less from our government this year.

Let's look at the facts. Tyendinaga township received \$613,000 in 2004 and will receive \$613,000 in 2005. That would be the same as last year. Deseronto received \$325,000 in 2004 and will receive \$392,583 in 2005, an increase of \$67,563. That would be more than last year. Belleville received \$5,401,000 in 2004 and will receive \$5,877,035 in 2005. That would be more than last year. Prince Edward county will receive an increase of \$588,992. That would be more than last year.

It's also reported to me that while in Picton, Mr. Tory commented more than once that I am "tired." On that one point, he is correct. I'm tired of having to correct his party's misinformation, I'm tired of his party conveniently forgetting the many errors their government made and I'm tired of Mr. Tory refusing to reveal where the \$2.4 billion in cuts are that he is planning to take out of our health care system.

### NIAGARA REGION

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I too am pleased to stand in the House today on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls, and indeed all of the Niagara Peninsula, to welcome the Niagara Economic and Tourism Corp., who in partnership with the region of Niagara have joined together to bring the Niagara region to Toronto this week.

As leaders in Niagara, they, like the Liberal government, have taken a long view that Niagara needs a strong

economy to prosper. Its partners in industry have made it clear that they agree. As a result, they have come together with one voice to advocate for the issues that matter most to our communities. I think we could all agree that the economy of Niagara and its border infrastructure impact the economic viability of not just Niagara, but Ontario. To that end, I'm pleased to say that our regional chair, Peter Partington, other elected officials, mayors and business leaders, and senior staff from the various levels of government have come to Queen's Park today.

In conclusion, I would like to invite, as my two colleagues have already done, all the members of the House to visit and have the opportunity to meet with all the elected officials at a reception that's being hosted later on this afternoon by the four members from the Niagara region.

### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the first session of the 38th Parliament.

They are Kyle Anderson from Durham, Dara Bowie from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, Alistair Butt from Ottawa-Orléans, Elizabeth Celentano from Nipissing, Lindsay Dunn from Northumberland, Owen Fawcett from Nickel Belt, Nathan Gamble from Scarborough-Agincourt, Kaitlin Giesen from Timiskaming-Cochrane, Inderraj Singh Grewal from Etobicoke North, Derek Kohalmi from Thornhill, Madison Kurchik from Stoney Creek, Jonathan Martin from Cambridge, Sean McConkey from Brant, Taylor Mercer from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Cassandra Muldoon from Oak Ridges, Trishaala Ninan from Hamilton Mountain, Alexandra Rayment from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Soyinka Reid from Brampton Centre, Joshua Rosenkrantz from Etobicoke Centre and Paula Sanderson from Don Valley West.

May we all welcome the new pages.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** May I ask you also to welcome former member Peter Partington from Brock, of the 33rd Parliament, who is in the House today. I'd also draw your attention to a former member of Parliament in Jamaica, Lawrence Telfer, accompanied by his niece, Norma Telfer, and Altop Telfer in the Speaker's gallery.

### MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing

order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, please say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Racco, Mario G.
Barrett, Toby	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bartolucci, Rick	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Bentley, Christopher	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Bountrogianni, Marie	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Scott, Laurie
Bradley, James J.	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Broten, Laurel C.	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Brownell, Jim	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Bryant, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Cansfield, Donna H.	Mauro, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Caplan, David	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Colle, Mike	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Crozier, Bruce	Millroy, John	Wilson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wong, Tony C.
Duguid, Brad	Munro, Julia	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	O'Toole, John	Yakubski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Oraziotti, David	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie	
Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry	

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie	Martel, Shelley	
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 70; the nays are 10.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

1400

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL TAXATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** A question to the Premier: I remind you that the Ontario Liberal election promise 104 says, "We will support our cities," and 225 says, "We will guarantee stable, long-term funding for our rural communities." Premier, in your own backyard, the eastern Ontario wardens' caucus issued a press release today entitled "Property taxes to jump sharply

thanks to province's new funding program." Lanark county alone will lose \$1.2 million over the next four years, resulting in a 6% property tax increase.

Premier, rest assured, you've already shattered the record for broken promises. Why are you going to raise taxes in eastern Ontario, and why are you committed to breaking yet more campaign promises?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this matter, and I know if there are any further details, the Minister of Finance would like to speak to those in a supplementary.

Let me say that we're very proud, first of all, of the new working relationship we have with Ontario municipalities. Secondly, when it comes to this particular matter, the subject of the question, we believe our new model is both fair and transparent. We also believe—we also know, in fact—that we are investing \$656 million in this new program. That is a 6.1% increase over last year. We're also providing municipalities with \$232 million in one-time assistance to transition into the new funding model. I'm proud to say that includes a \$33-million increase after it was first announced, because we listened to the folks in the municipal sector, ROMA and OGRA, in particular, who said that they felt we might be able to work with them and do something better.

We did that. We are proud of the changes we've made, proud of the new model, proud of the fact that, for the first time, it introduces fairness and transparency into our partnership with municipalities.

**Mr. Hudak:** The Premier talks about transparency, but what the eastern Ontario wardens will say is transparent is that this is a raw deal for eastern Ontario municipalities.

Let's look at Belleville, for example, and Prince Edward county, as well. Last week John Tory caught you red-handed breaking promise 225 with your cuts to Prince Edward county. You dispatched your member Mr. Parsons from that area to try to defend your honour, saying that there were no cuts, but the decision is—today we find out that we were wrong; we actually underestimated the cuts you made to that county. According to this morning's Belleville Intelligencer, "Prince Edward county's chief administrative officer, Dick Shannon, said" the new formula "takes \$600,000 away from the county." It continues, "The new provincial funding formula ... could result in double-digit property tax increases" for the people of Prince Edward county.

Premier, stand in your place and tell us that you are going to fix this broken formula, that you're not going to cause massive property tax increases in Prince Edward county.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The member opposite may find it useful to traffic in fiction and scaremongering, but I don't really think that's particularly helpful.

Let me tell you about some of the facts, because I think that from time to time they can be helpful. According to the facts, Belleville receives \$5.88 million this year; that includes \$476,035 more than last year.



Prince Edward county receives \$5.3 million this year; that includes \$588,922 more than last year.

Now, my friend opposite is obviously a defender of the status quo and he would embrace that wholeheartedly. If we were to do that, he may be interested in knowing that in Port Colborne that would mean a cut of \$1 million. If that's what he is saying we should do, then he should stand in his place and say that he defends the status quo and that the folks in Port Colborne, a community for which he has specific responsibility, should receive a cut of \$1 million.

**Mr. Hudak:** Mr. Premier, with all due respect, what a bunch of nonsense from across the floor. You are saying that the eastern Ontario wardens are wrong; you're saying Prince Edward county is wrong. But when it comes to choosing between the word of the wardens of eastern Ontario or the people from Prince Edward county against Premier Pinocchio, I'll side with those municipal officials every single time.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. Will members please watch their language in here. I am going to ask the member to withdraw that.

**Mr. Hudak:** I withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'd like the member to complete his question.

**Mr. Hudak:** Not only Prince Edward county, not only the eastern Ontario wardens, but the mayor of Cobourg, whom I congratulate for rising to the occasion and helping his community with the fire, is quoted in a recent article as saying, "In three years, we"—Cobourg—"will lose \$624,000." He says the funding will be reduced under your so-called fair formula, resulting in property tax increases of \$10 per household this year, \$25 in 2007 and \$50 by 2008. Premier, why do you continue to break your campaign promises, causing property tax increases in Cobourg, Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** No matter how exercised the member becomes, it does not change the fact that he is wrong. He is just plain wrong.

Let me tell you about the riding of Leeds-Grenville. I know that my friend Bob Runciman will be interested in these figures. In Athens township, under the old model, they would receive \$398,000. We're increasing that to \$439,199. In Gananoque, under the old fund, \$457,000; under the new one, \$749,000. Leeds and Thousand Islands township, under the old fund, \$721,000; under the new fund, \$896,539.

We are proud of the new relationship we have developed with Ontario's municipalities. We're proud of this new fund. It introduces, for the first time, transparency and fairness. It is good news for all the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker:** New question. The member for Erie-Lincoln.

**Mr. Hudak:** That's certainly not what the eastern Ontario wardens are saying. It's certainly not what they're saying in Prince Edward county. It's certainly not what

they're saying in Cobourg, Ontario. They would appreciate it, Premier, with all due respect, if you would respond to the communities that have brought forward these concerns.

Right across Ontario, mayors, wardens and municipal councillors are upset with your new municipal deal. It's a raw deal for Ontario's municipalities. Hastings county chief administrative officer, Jim Pine, said they "stand to lose a total of \$11 million annually by 2008" across eastern Ontario. United counties warden Alvin Runnalls says of your new program, "The biggest losers will be our taxpayers, who just can't afford to pick up the bill any more."

Premier, at ROMA, the last time you tangled with the eastern wardens, you backed down within 24 hours. I'll ask you to do it again. Will you scrap this formula and make sure you put one in place that is fair to our municipalities, not these cuts we're seeing across the province?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I like what the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Roger Anderson, had to say about this. He said, "Today's ... announcement shows that the Premier is listening to municipalities. The province's decision to pay money owed to municipalities for 2003 and 2004 is good news for property taxpayers all over Ontario." I think Mr. Anderson is someone who is specifically designated to represent Ontario municipalities, someone whose judgment can be relied upon.

**Mr. Hudak:** You know what's disappointing is that the Premier well knows that that quote was released before Roger Anderson saw the numbers that are causing these cuts across Ontario. I know the Premier wants to engage—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

Member from Erie-Lincoln.

**Mr. Hudak:** I know the Premier wants to engage in the game of being fast and loose with quotes, using old quotes. The Premier stands in his place and says he is the only one who knows the facts, whereas wardens, mayors and regional leaders across the province are decrying your new funding formula as a broken promise and a raw deal.

**1410**

More quotes: Shafee Bacchus, Niagara region's commissioner of corporate and financial services, says, "In actuality," Niagara is "losing \$5 million," under this broken formula. The Welland Tribune reports that Niagara Falls "will lose its \$3.1-million CRF allocation."

Mr. Premier, who's telling the truth: the officials in Niagara and across the province or a Premier who breaks promises every single day?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, the member would have us return to the status quo; he's very comfortable back there. We've done something different. We've introduced transparency and fairness and a 6.1% increase. The members opposite are not happy with a 6.1% increase.

Let me tell you again what would happen to some interesting communities were we to have embraced the

status quo on a continuing basis. In Caledon, John Tory's riding, that would mean a cut of \$1.2 million. In Kawartha Lakes, it would have meant a cut of \$2.7 million. In Port Colborne, as I said a moment ago, it would mean a cut of \$1 million. In Gananoque, it would mean a cut of \$302,000. In Pembroke, it would mean a cut of \$418,000. In Wilmot, it would mean a cut of \$556,000. In Smith Falls—and I have many more—it would mean a cut of \$568,000. That is but a short list of the many communities that are benefiting under this.

**Mr. Hudak:** Premier, you made two very clear and solemn promises to our municipalities that you would fund them fairly. That's what this issue is all about. Your own numbers from the Ministry of Finance Web site don't match at all what the Premier and his ministers are saying in this assembly. Municipal officials from across the province continuously say that your numbers are wrong. St. Catharines Mayor Tim Rigby: "Over a period of three years, we'll be whittled down to nothing." The Brantford city council just last night passed a resolution expressing "extreme dissatisfaction" with your new program. Brantford will be short \$1 million by 2008, leaving two grim choices: a substantial property tax hike or a big reduction in services.

Premier, are you going to keep your promises? Are you going to improve this funding formula, or are you going to force municipalities like Niagara and Brantford to raise property taxes through the roof? Which is it going to be?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think it's important to recall how we got into this in the first place. It's because, notwithstanding the Tory government's claim that this was going to be a revenue-neutral exercise, their down-loading left Ontario municipalities in a terrible state. We've worked with Ontario municipalities. We've come up with a program, with a fund, with a plan that is fair and transparent.

I want to speak to a matter raised in the earlier question about the Niagara region, because here again I think the facts are important. Overall, municipalities in Niagara region are getting \$16.4 million under the new program. That's over \$3 million more, or a 22.5% increase over last year. The regional municipality of Niagara itself is getting a 10% increase. Those are the facts, and they're important to understand.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Ontario's electricity system is already under pressure. A couple of weeks ago, you were forced to reduce voltage in the system after seven nuclear reactors went out of service. It was either reduce voltage or face the prospect of a brownout or blackout. Now, with the hot, humid days of summer ahead of us, that electricity transmission system will be under even greater stress. The engineers, the scientists, the maintenance schedulers—those people who work at Hydro One and call themselves the energy professionals—are going to be more important than ever.

Premier, in that context, can you explain to the people of Ontario why you as the sole owner of Hydro One have threatened to lock these very important people out at the very time when we need them to keep the lights on?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** My understanding is that both parties will return to the table to continue negotiations on this collective agreement. There are a number of issues between management and the workers. My hope is that both sides will stay at the table and continue to negotiate and bargain in good faith to try to resolve the differences that are between them, and to ensure our company works successfully and appropriately for the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** That's the answer from the McGuinty government in here. Out there, the head of Hydro One sent all these workers personal e-mails and told them that if they didn't accept an 11% pay cut, they were going to be locked out, at the very time we need these people to keep the lights on. These are the people who make the electricity transmission system work. This bargaining tactic sounds very reminiscent of the McGuinty government's bargaining tactic with the doctors, and we know what a disaster that was: "Either take it or we're going to shove it down your throat." Let me ask you this, Minister of Energy: Are you prepared to intervene and make sure there is a fair offer put on the table, or are you going to continue down the disastrous road you went down with the doctors?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** We believe the two parties should negotiate an open and free collective agreement. The kind of interference the member opposite is talking about is exactly like the social contract. I am absolutely astounded that any member of the Ontario Federation of Labour or any member of that party would suggest for one moment that a government should intervene.

We believe in the Ontario Labour Relations Act. We believe in full and free collective bargaining. We understand there will be differences between management and union. We understand the best place to resolve those differences is at the bargaining table. My desire and my hope is that both sides will get down to serious bargaining at the table. My indication from both sides this morning is that they will. My hope is that they will come to an amicable solution to the differences between them over the course of time, and my hope is that both sides can come together to ensure that our electricity sector continues to prosper and grow in the years to come to help ensure a safe and growing economy for the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** Perhaps the Minister of Energy and the McGuinty government missed it, but Hydro One, after having their final offer, as they referred to it, rejected by 95%, basically said today that the offer remains the same—no change. And what's that offer? An 11.4% reduction in base pay, and all new employees will face a lower, two-tier system of pensions and benefits.

Minister, these are the people who keep the lights on. These are the people, especially for the greater Toronto



area, who ensure that the transmission system works, that the electricity produced outside the greater Toronto area is transmitted efficiently and effectively into the greater Toronto area to keep the lights on. What I heard in your answer was, "I hope, I hope, I hope." Will you send some direction to your boy at Hydro One, Mr. Parkinson, to put a fair offer on the table, since he's clearly doing your dirty work?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** On March 31, public salary disclosure was released in Ontario. This member who stands up and pretends to be defending these workers—let me give you the breakdown. Of 1,300 members on public salary disclosure, fully 1,000 of them were in collective agreements, members of bargaining units, one-third of this bargaining unit. Do you know what Mr. Hampton said on March 31? He said, "These people aren't concerned with providing a service to the people of Ontario. They're concerned about their own salaries." Fully one-third—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. The members are the ones who are making the noise.

Minister, you've got 10 seconds.

1420

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Unlike the member opposite, we believe they have the right to full and free collective bargaining. That member has more positions on free collective bargaining than the Kama Sutra. You ought to be ashamed of your two-faced positions on all of these issues.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr. Hampton:** To the Premier, because at the end of the day, the buck has to stop with the Premier: These are the people who keep the lights on. Your Minister of Energy talks about public sector salary disclosure. What I find interesting is that you gave the chief executive officer at Hydro One—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock, please. Member from Eglinton—Lawrence, will you come to order, please. Leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm happy to talk about public sector disclosure, because the McGuinty government gave the chief executive officer at Hydro One a 35% pay increase in 2004. This is basically from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. Then, of course, he gets a mortgage subsidy on his home, and if he should quit or be fired, he gets two years' pay.

Meanwhile, you're telling these folks who keep the lights on, who make sure the transmission system works efficiently, that they should take an 11% pay cut and that new hires should accept an inferior pension and an inferior benefit package.

Tell these workers, Premier, how you justify giving your friend at Hydro One, Mr. Parkinson, a \$500,000 pay increase while you tell these workers they should take less.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The Minister of Energy, Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** What I said in the House, and Hansard will reflect this—I said it at the time, I'll say it

again, I said it in a scrum—is that we leave and entrust the management of Hydro One to the board of directors of Hydro One. That answer is consistent. It is our view at this time that it is appropriate for both parties to get back to the bargaining table and negotiate a collective agreement that will be in the interests of all workers.

We believe that the Ontario Labour Relations Act, we believe that the board of directors, which was appointed, in fact, by the previous government—my colleague opposite reminds me that Mr. Rae, the former NDP Premier of Ontario, is on that board. We have confidence in the board's ability to manage and oversee the affairs of the corporation. We look forward to both sides getting back to the table to negotiate a fair solution for all concerned.

**Mr. Hampton:** The Premier ducked the question again, so I'll go back to the Premier. It wasn't just the \$500,000 pay increase and the mortgage subsidy and the \$2-million severance package that you've given Mr. Parkinson. Last year, he decided that he had to travel to Las Vegas and Australia on business. He took his wife with him. Hydro One paid for that. He decided that he needed an expensive membership in Glen Abbey Golf Club. Membership costs close to \$5,000. Hydro One paid for that. It seems that he has very expensive tastes indeed.

So you're saying to Mr. Parkinson that a hefty pay increase is OK, but to the very people who keep the lights on, the very people who ensure the transmission system works and that we don't suffer another blackout as we did a couple of summers ago, you're saying, "Take an 11% pay cut and accept inferior pensions and an inferior benefit package."

Explain to the people of Ontario, Premier: How do you justify opening the vault to Mr. Parkinson, but say to the people who keep the lights on, "You take less"?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Again, under the laws of Ontario, the board of directors of Hydro One has responsibility for negotiating the contracts of both non-unionized employees and unionized employees. The collective bargaining process has to be allowed to unfold. It's not this government's intention to interfere with free and full collective bargaining. We believe in the rights of working people to negotiate, both those individuals in the public and broader public sectors and those in crown corporations, or indeed in corporations like Hydro One and OPG, which have a unique incorporation.

It is in everyone's interests that both sides get back to the table and negotiate and bargain collectively and freely. My hope is that both sides will come to a solution to this difficult impasse.

**Mr. Hampton:** Again to the Premier, because the buck stops with the Premier, here's the scenario: Mr. Parkinson even believes that it's acceptable to take the Hydro One helicopter when he wants to go to the cottage; or when he's at the cottage and he has to go to a meeting, he wants to use the Hydro One helicopter. His bargaining position to these workers, these essential workers, these people who keep the transmission system working, these

workers who keep the lights on, is, "You either take the 11% pay cut and accept inferior pensions and benefits, or we're locking you out." Does that sound like a reasonable, logical position that the Premier is prepared to defend?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** What has been reasonable and logical is that the board of directors is in the best position to negotiate both management and union collective agreements and to make those decisions. The government has entrusted those people to do that. We continue to trust their good judgment and the judgment of people like Bob Rae, who's on the human resources committee. And I remind the workers at Hydro One, the non-management workers, the 1,084 union members at Hydro One who were on public salary disclosure, that that member said, "These people aren't concerned with providing a service to the people of Ontario; they're concerned about their own salaries."

You'll say one thing one day and another thing another day simply to pander and create a false impression that you care. You're more interested in scoring cheap political points than finding an amicable solution to a difficult labour situation.

#### TRANSPORTATION FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Back in the 1970s, there was a special grant given out to disability transportation.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Murdoch:** No, you can't transfer it to the—they're going to transfer it on me, but that's all right. I'll still give you the history.

In the late 1990s, when the CRF came out, the transportation grant for the disabled was included in that grant as a special item. In rural Ontario, it's really needed because we have long distances, and it has worked quite well. There are over seven municipalities in my riding that applied for it and have had it since the early 1970s. Now that we have this new formula called OMPF—it gets a bit confusing—is this grant still going to be left on there as a separate item? That's what I want you to guarantee to me today, that this grant for the disabled transportation will be left as a separate item when it comes to giving the grants to the different municipalities.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** I want to express my true appreciation to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. If he were leading the questions for his party on our new initiatives on municipal finance, it may well be that we would get a clearer picture of the truth from the opposition party.

I simply want to say to him that I know he personally has been on the phone with my staff over the course of the past three hours, and I think we're giving him all the information he needs. But I would want to point out to him and to the people of Hanover, and to the people of

the province, that under the new Ontario municipal partnership funding program, Hanover, the host community of this disabled service, is going to be receiving some \$958,000. That, for the taxpayers in Hanover, is an increase of some \$330,000.

1430

**Mr. Murdoch:** My question is very easy to answer—and I appreciate the money that Hanover is going to get: I will applaud that. But what do you say about all the other municipalities that are not going to get the money? Only two out of the municipalities that I represent got more.

Now, here's where we get into trouble, though. This grant is not tied to CRF or OMPF. It never was; it was a separate grant. What we have to be careful about is that your ministry doesn't start to tie it there, because most of my municipalities are going to get less money. That would mean there would be less money coming in if you tie it to the transfers. They would get less money there. That is what we don't understand for next year. Will our grant stay the same? Is it going to go down? Will Hanover's go up? We can't get a straight answer on that one, so I would like you to give me an answer on that, if you can. If you can't, I would hope you instruct people who work in your ministry to get hold of us and help us out.

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** I know my friend would have wanted to put on the record that even for those communities, whether in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound or anywhere in the province, even those communities that are not getting increases—and remember, we increased this program by some 6.1%—no municipality will receive less than they received under the Tory program that we are scrapping. Why are we scrapping it? Because it was part of the awful legacy of downloading and inequity and unworkable municipal financing. I'll tell my friend that I am aware of the special arrangements that were made for disability transport in the community of Hanover. And as my staff undertook earlier with him by phone, I will undertake here in this House to pay attention to the concerns that he raised today in the House.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister—for almost two months I have been asking to meet with you. There is a crisis in Hamilton for women trying to escape domestic violence and keep their children safe. You promised to fund second-stage housing and then didn't. In Hamilton, 28 units of transitional housing will be lost because core funding that you promised would help agencies like Family Services Hamilton never arrived. Seven times we called your office for the meeting. Seven times not one return phone call. Only now that the NDP has alerted the media are you finally agreeing to meet.

Executive director LaFerne Clarke of Family Services Hamilton is here today. My question is this: At the meeting you finally have committed to, will you commit to



providing Hamilton's second-stage services with the core provincial funding that they need to save the precious few units of second-stage housing in my city?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the opportunity to answer this. I can tell you that Hamilton has some tremendous advocates, and many of them are in our caucus. One of them is also in our cabinet. I am very proud to say that the minister for children and the members who come from Hamilton have done a tremendous amount of work on behalf of Hamilton family services. Moreover, we have been working with them for a long time to actually set a date so that not only will I meet, but I will actually be in a position to go out and visit the agency.

We made a \$3.5-million commitment to transitional housing programs, and we made that announcement. This particular agency was not in a financial position to receive it. I understand that there have been serious governance issues that this new board has been dealing with as it applies to second-stage housing. We are prepared to work with this organization to find a way, because in the end this government is committed, more than any government to date, to the issues of domestic violence. I think the people in Hamilton know exactly what that is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Minister, you didn't answer the question. Safe housing like second-stage is needed so women do not have to make the decision to stay with or return to the abuser, because homelessness and poverty is often the only alternative for them and their children. It's also a place where they can rebuild their lives during a time when they are in considerable danger. The risk for spousal homicide increases right after a woman decides to leave the abuser. Knowing all of this, despite the lessons learned from the Hadley inquest and other reports, you are breaking your promise to reinvest in second-stage housing and, as a result, they are starting to close down. The upcoming budget gives you the opportunity to make amends. Other housing advocates are here today as well. Will you tell them now that you will keep your promise and restore the funding to second-stage housing?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I'm very pleased to say that our ministry has been working closely with this agency, and what we have to do with this particular agency is find a way around some serious financial issues that they have had to contend with. Our ministry is going to be sure that when we invest in what we're doing for domestic violence, it will be with agencies that can deliver. I expect that the new leadership that is now arriving and has been there for the last several months with this particular agency is going to do very well. They have also been contacted about the meeting that we have already booked with them.

You should know that the local MPP from this area, Judy Marsales, has been in contact with me, as has Marie Bountrogianni, and I can tell you that you have very strong advocates in the government fighting for the people of Hamilton.

When it comes to the domestic violence action plan of this government, there is no historic government in Ontario that has paid more mind to this issue than ours. We have made a \$66-million commitment, which speaks nothing of the investments in affordable housing that we will work on with our federal counterparts, because when we talk about housing, we know it is a significant issue and we are determined to make this—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** My question is directed to Minister Pupatello. Contrary to the honourable member from Hamilton East, we have kept a very important promise. The domestic violence action plan announced by the Premier and by you, Minister, on December 13 was an important promise kept by the McGuinty government to help women and children suffering from domestic abuse. I know how hard your ministry is working, and I am encouraged about this balanced plan.

My question is, what measures are in place to help prevent violence before it happens and to ensure that victims of abuse get the help they need and not a lot of hot air?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** I do appreciate that this MPP has been recognized in her local community for fighting for these issues. When we tabled our domestic violence action plan, this member from Hamilton was lauded by those in her own community because she understands the critical importance of the four components of our plan.

We are focused on public education, a \$5-million commitment. We are committed to training people on the front line to know how to respond and how we, our neighbours, our friends and our co-workers can respond to this issue. We are committed to community supports so that when it happens, our communities are ready to respond. Fourth, on justice, we want to stop this in the first place, but when it happens, we need to be prepared so that our justice system responds accordingly. We are determined for our plan to be enacted, and we are going to do it well.

**Ms. Marsales:** Minister, I'm surprised that after years of across-the-board cuts to shelters and traditional housing imposed by both the NDP and Conservative governments, they continue to criticize our investment of new funds to address domestic violence. We are the first government in Ontario to develop a comprehensive plan to help women and their children who are fleeing abusive situations.

What funding is being provided for shelters and second-stage housing under this action plan?

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** We made a very full announcement that prescribed all kinds of new funding across the board, across those four main areas. Let me specifically say that family services in Hamilton is currently being provided from our ministry \$326,000 for VAW counselling, \$98,000 for the broader public sector pay equity and \$2,100 for performance management. We understand that there's more work to do with this particular agency. We want them to be a vibrant, successful agency to be able to

respond to the needs of those women who come to their doors. We are prepared to take that kind of personal time.

Let me tell you that this minister will see to it that we can do everything. The minister for children, as well, and the local members who represent that area have been determined to see that these agencies are strong.

1440

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I have a question for the Premier. Yesterday, I asked the minister when the cheques for the market revenue payment would start to flow from his announcement of March 29. He said the cheques were already sent, but when we checked with Agricorp, that turned out not to be the truth.

I have a letter from Shady Lawn Farms dated April 15 and received by them last Friday. It shows their eligibility under the March announcement, and it says, "You will receive a cheque issued by the Minister of Finance ... in the near future." The minister said it was already in the mail. In fact, the note I just quoted from had a letter from the minister in the envelope. Obviously, he has no idea what's going out or what's going on in his ministry.

Premier, your minister's commitment was to send the cheques in two or three weeks; not a letter, not a note, but a cheque. When can Shady Lawn Farms in Nanticoke expect their cheque?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, let me confirm once again that he is doing exceptionally good work on behalf of Ontario's farmers. As a result of his efforts in particular, we were proud to announce an additional \$79 million for grain and oilseed producers, notwithstanding the financial circumstances in which we find ourselves. Payments were processed last week, and I'm proud to say that cheques are being mailed today and tomorrow, April 26 and April 27.

**Mr. Hardeman:** Mr. Premier, the farmers of Ontario do not share your opinion of your Minister of Agriculture.

Let me give you another example of a promise made and a promise not kept. This one is closer to home. In my riding of Oxford, a local farmer went to the bank to secure funding so he could buy seed for planting. He called me and told me that, based on the results of last year, his bank said no to his bank loan. After repeated calls to Agricorp to find out when he was going to receive the money, they couldn't give him a definite date. As of today—today, Mr. Premier—Agricorp still couldn't tell him when he could expect his cheque. All he received was a notice yesterday stating that yes, at some point in time he was going to get some help. Premier, another promise broken.

When is your government going to accept responsibility for the farmers of Ontario, or are you going to continue on with the Liberal broken-promise tradition?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** If we might place this in some context here—I find that's always pretty helpful—

farmers found themselves up against it because of international commodity pricing. We decided that, notwithstanding our financial constraints, it would be important and right that we find a way to help farmers. So we've found \$79 million, at the insistence, I might say, of our Minister of Agriculture, who has been doing exceptionally good work on behalf of farmers.

We're proud to make that \$79 million available. As I said before, and I'll repeat it, payments were processed last week and cheques are being mailed today and tomorrow. We're very proud of that.

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last Wednesday, you defended your meetings with high-priced lobbyists by pretending that you also met with ordinary Ontarians. You bragged that you met with non-profit organizations about housing issues and social service issues.

But we have a letter here dated March 24, 2005, addressed to Dalton McGuinty from Mr. David Lance, who says, "I am a single father living in Toronto and struggling to raise three-year-old twin boys on OW.... After the NCBS is deducted from my cheque, I receive just \$859.60. We would like to meet with you ... to tell you what it would mean to families if you ended the clawback in this coming budget year."

Minister, you refused to meet with them. The Premier refused to meet with them. If you're so busy meeting with those you call the most vulnerable, why are you ignoring David Lance, one of the poorest parents in this province?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm just surprised that the member opposite doesn't parade them in the House to embarrass them like he does most of the time. Let me say in this matter that there are 103 MPPs in this Legislature, and we represent all of Ontario. I expect fully that the member from the riding of Beaches—East York would be meeting regularly with everyday people, just as I do in my riding of Windsor West and as every one of us does.

When it comes to our ministry policies, we work hard to hear from everyday people, not just their representatives. To begin your question with me by talking about high-priced lobbyists is absolutely absurd. You are welcome to look at my track record and the kinds of groups and people that I meet with on an everyday basis, including just before running into this House today. When we talk about welfare issues, we talk about housing issues, social issues, how we're going to deal with addicts who are on welfare. Please don't come into this House and think for a moment that this government hasn't been serious about making real good social policy changes, because—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. Supplementary.



**Mr. Prue:** Your record is not meeting with people who write to you directly. I met with Mr. Lance; you did not. Minister, last week you bragged about meeting with out-of-work Tories. You said: "Tories are bringing people to see me. That's my job." You bragged about meeting with Accenture lobbyists. You bragged about meeting with Phil Dewan. These are the people that you said, "I'm proud to meet with."

What about the people who don't have the influence that Phil Dewan has, and can't hire out-of-work Tories. What about David Lance? He can't afford the \$550 to attend your lobbying seminar, because you take \$1,500 per child off him in clawback each and every year. Minister, how dare you get up in the House and say you've met with the most vulnerable when you won't even meet with the families whose baby bonuses you claw back from every month.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I find the kind of question outrageous. All I can tell you is that on a regular basis what we do in our ministry, led by Liberal leadership from the Liberal caucus, and what our Liberals are most proud of, I think, after health care and education, is that absolutely we have to protect our most vulnerable. We have made significant changes. The first thing we did was eliminate the cutback on the allowance for pregnant women on welfare, and then we stopped that lifetime ban on welfare for those who have been convicted in the past.

This member couldn't possibly be opposed to the positive changes we've made. You could not possibly be opposed to the changes that we have made so far. I will be the first one to admit that we are not where we want to be yet, that it takes major investment and major resources to do everything that we want to do, and we can't do it right away. So we have very, very difficult choices to make about how quickly we can move forward with change. I'm the first one to say that. I will stand and repeat that again. We want to go further, and we are only encumbered by the fiscal mess left to us by your party and the government before.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** My question is for the Minister of Education. It was my privilege on Sunday, April 17, to be with you as you accepted the Upper Canada District School Board's white paper concerning Ontario's small schools. As you know, the small schools summit was held in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, and I would like to at this acknowledge the good work of Susan Edwards, David Thomas, Mike O'Donnell, Phil Dawes and all the others who worked on this white paper.

The majority of high schools in Ontario are small, by which I mean have less than 1,000 students. The schools in my riding are perfect examples of this. These schools provide education preparedness to the students from the greater part of the province. Unfortunately, under the previous government, funding was allocated to schools by size alone, discounting distribution entirely. You have

time and again explained your desire to rectify the errors of the past. Minister, could you reiterate your commitment to small schools and explain to us how your ministry will address the problems created by past governments.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** Thank you for the question and for your advocacy of what is essentially a sound education idea, which is that we don't close schools simply based on their size. Unfortunately, for eight or 10 years, we laboured under rules that were prejudicial against good small schools, and against most of the students, by definition, because they are in those small schools. We now have an extra \$30 million that we've put out to keep the good schools open.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The member from Trinity-Spadina come to order, please. I can't hear the minister responding.

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Further, we really want to make sure that people out there understand fully that the school evaluation process we put in place in February is there to put a value on schools, to really see how a school contributes to the community, to the students, to the system, but ultimately even to the local economy, that that's a balanced way to look at schools. Particularly, we will see how, as proposed by the small schools summit, kids actually do. The graduation rates are better in small schools; that should be taken into account. In short, we should value schools by how well they do, not simply by the size they are.

1450

**Mr. Brownell:** Thank you for clarifying your vision for us. As next week is Education Week, a week to celebrate public education in Ontario, it is fitting that you express your commitment to Ontario's students. A decent education is a basic requirement in our society. Part of the commitment you have made is to improve graduation rates dramatically, ensuring that all students have the necessary skills to compete in the job market. Minister, what programs do you have planned to make this vision become a reality?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** I would enjoin all members to take part in the activities next week. Education Week is a responsibility for everyone in this House, including the member opposite who takes it lightly. Essentially there is a role now for the members in the Legislature to actually help appreciate the challenge. For example, one of the saddest legacies of the last government is an increased dropout rate, fewer people with high school diplomas because they mismanaged some of the changes. We need to send a strong signal to those students that they are going to receive assistance. We started last year with additional help for 120 projects around the province, with extra assistance for thousands of students who would otherwise have been discouraged and left school. We are now moving forward with a whole range of plans for next fall.

Next week would be a good opportunity for every member of this House to send a signal that you can't drop

out of high school. You need to understand that help is under way in those schools. It really is difficult for people who reach a certain age not to have had success. Under the past government, the help wasn't there; under our government, it is. I encourage all members to encourage those individuals to finish their schooling and take part in education—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. During committee yesterday on Bill 144, one of the presenters expressed concerns about the impact of changes to the Labour Relations Act that have the potential to eliminate the right of employees to the safety and security of their property and their homes. In fact, he cited a particular situation in the drywall sector where employees were not just harassed, threatened and intimidated to join a union, but had 28 tires sliced. These threats and the vandalism did not stop on the job site but continued at their homes. Minister, these are going to be the consequences of card-based certification in the construction industry. How will you guarantee the safety and security of employees, their homes and their property?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour):** The reforms we've brought forward are fair and balanced. With respect to the question of intimidation and coercion, that is precisely why, for all sectors, we are restoring the remedial certification power that affects outrageous conduct both by employers and by unions, and the interim reinstatement power. That is why it is essential to have a remedy in those cases where the vote is interfered with by either the employer or the union, or there is conduct that removes the fairness of the vote. The member has hit on the very issue.

The member will also know that to get a vote you have to have cards signed, even under her own system. The essential part of fairness in labour relations is: Provide a remedy so that those who interfere with the workers' right to choose suffer the consequences of their interference. I'm surprised the Tories continue to reject that position.

**Mrs. Witmer:** It's obvious the Minister of Labour has no concern or caring for individual employees who can be threatened, intimidated and harassed in the construction sector. I say to this minister, not only do you not care about these individual employees who have no recourse, as you well know, but you are also stripping workers of their right to a secret ballot vote, which you did not mention. You're trying to confuse the issue. It's you who does not understand.

You are leaving these workers vulnerable to the tactics of unions. You are creating unfairness and you are discriminating against construction employees. A construction employee will not have a secret ballot vote, yet someone working somewhere else will. Are you prepared to scrap your change for card-based certification in the

construction sector or are you going to proceed to discriminate against and marginalize these construction employees?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** Unfortunately, it's the honourable member's position that discriminates against workers by refusing to support their democratic right to choose, by rewarding outrageous conduct by employers that effectively removes a worker's right to choose in a vote situation or that rewards outrageous union conduct. She supports the conduct and she undermines the democratic right to choose.

Of course we had to provide an extra option in the construction sector because of the nature of the industry. The Tories recognized the special nature of construction when they brought forward changes to the bargaining structure in 1999 in the greater Toronto area residential construction sector. They restricted bargaining rights. Were they trying to prejudice those workers? I suspect not. Were they trying to reward contractors? I suspect not. They recognized the very special factors that relate to construction, and they tailored the provisions for it: exactly what we've done. We support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. New question.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Before the last election, you promised that you would protect northern schools threatened with closure. In fact, I want to quote you: "Since 1999, 25 schools in the north have been closed and 18 additional schools are now threatened with closure.... The Rozanski report recommended an increase in funding for small, rural schools, transportation and schools with declining enrolment...." And then you said, "We will fix the funding formula as recommended by Rozanski.... We will protect northern schools." That was your promise.

Now, Fourway School near Thunder Bay and five other schools in northern Ontario are scheduled to close in a matter of weeks. Premier, where is the new funding formula you promised? Where is the new money for schools with declining enrolment? Where is the new money for transportation that you promised? The parents and children of Fourway School want to know where it is.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** We met today, in fact, with some of the representatives of Fourway School, and they were part of a group that I met with in October. I can say that they're pleased to know that we have appointed Dave Cooke, a former Minister of Education. We have done exactly what is needed, which is to put in the situation where we're not having to fight with school boards. What we are going to do is make sure that the children and youth of Lakehead, as well as any other part of the province, will all benefit. That board



did undertake a review earlier, but we're going to make sure—absolutely sure—that they do benefit.

I can tell you that the parents who are concerned about rural schools are appreciative of the \$30 million we put in, above and beyond Dr. Rozanski's recommendation, to keep good schools open. They appreciate and they know very well that we've put a value on their schools and their communities which wasn't to be found when the NDP closed 155 schools during their turn in government.

**Mr. Hampton:** Parents want to know, where is the money for busing? Where is the money for small rural schools with declining enrolment? Neither the Premier nor the Minister of Education has given them an answer.

They also want to know what happened to the guidelines that the Minister of Education issued in February, when he said that there will be "mandatory public notice of one year before a school is closed," that there will be "several opportunities for public input, with wide notice in the community. A task force would be appointed, headed by a trustee, with broad membership to hold public meetings, solicit feedback and gain community consensus."

What these parents have been provided with by the Minister of Education is nowhere near this. It's a whitewash procedure. What they want to know now—I just met with them—is, will you use your powers under the Education Act to prevent the closure of Fourway School, as you promised before the election?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** The member opposite makes a career, and some would say a small career, out of misrepresenting things to people who have a right to expect straight answers from this House. In fact, he now is even taking the point of misrepresenting some of the people he's advocating for, because I met with the representatives—I'd say some very hard-working people who came down here—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I can't hear what the minister is saying.

1500

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** The families that care about Fourway School know that there has to be a means of making sure that their kids will benefit. They want a government that's prepared to do that. Even though the member opposite dismisses Dave Cooke, we don't. We say instead that the former Minister of Education has the capacity to conduct a serious review.

As we said in February, and as we say today, we'll make sure the review takes place to make sure the spirit of the new guidelines, which aren't in place yet, is met, even for decisions that were made before they came out. That is the fairness that they're seeking in northern communities. It's the fairness that we're going to great lengths to make sure is extended. They do have faith in this government to be able to provide that. I'm not sure they can have faith in the opposition when they continue to put themselves forward in such a slipshod fashion.

## PETITIONS

### WILDLIFE PROTECTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario,

"The unreasonable and inhumane restriction that the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) is placing on wildlife rehabilitators with respect to the release of orphaned animals will eliminate their ability to help wildlife.

"Whereas wildlife rehabilitators provide an essential public service for many thousands of people seeking help on behalf of orphaned and injured wildlife in Ontario;

"Whereas the unreasonable release restrictions imposed on wildlife rehabilitators for animals in their care by the OMNR will prevent responsible wildlife rehabilitation, not only compromising wildlife and frustrating the public but forcing it underground and thereby jeopardizing safety;

"Whereas this will incur significant new cost for local governments with respect to bylaw and public health and safety interventions while creating an emotional and volatile climate because the majority of people in Ontario are simply unwilling to see healthy young animals euthanized;

"We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned that the care and release restrictions imposed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources which are in violation of the international standards will eliminate the provision of responsible wildlife services in our community.

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work with wildlife rehabilitators to ensure progressive, humane and responsible regulations that reflect the international care and release standard that states: 'Orphaned wildlife should be raised with others of their own species, to learn proper conspecific behaviours, and the group should then be released together in appropriate natural areas, with the transitional care for those species that require it, generally within the city or county of origin.'"

I affix my signature to the petition, as I agree with it.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition that was given to me by some members of the Mississauga Chinese professional and business association, a great organization that serves our city very well. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are

delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital, to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients and the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition, and I'll have Nathan carry it down for me.

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Hon. Michael Bryant is minister responsible for democratic renewal; and

"Whereas the Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General of Ontario, is elected to safeguard our justice system on behalf of the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the ministry of our Attorney General may not be aware of the serious and important issues facing individuals involved in areas of the justice system even though the Attorney General's ministry is continually monitoring;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General, for his in-depth investigation of the Ontario judicial system and [to] make the public aware of his findings immediately."

I affix my name to this petition.

#### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition given to me by some members of the Ligar Residents' Association, especially Geoffrey Smith, Elaine Lord, Therese Ellis and Sandra Fernandes, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved....

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I'm pleased to autograph this petition and to ask Sean to carry it down for me.

#### HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I have a petition here on behalf of many constituents in my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals and/or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments, and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields, and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves,

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers; prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences; and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

I affix my name to this petition and send it down.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition here given to me by Kuen Tan of Sweetbitch Court, who is one of those helping me to obtain capital funds for the Credit Valley Hospital. Her petition reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel



District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I support the petition, and I will have Paula bring it down for me.

1510

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that is entitled the pay more, get less health care petition.

"Whereas the federal Income Tax Act at present has a minimum amount of medical expenses for which a taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit;

"Whereas the health and medical expenses of every citizen in the province of Ontario, great or small, affect their overall net income;

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government moved in their 2004 budget on May 18, 2004, to delist publicly funded medical services such as chiropractic services, optometry examinations and physiotherapy services;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Income Tax Act remove the present minimum amount of medical expenses for which an Ontario taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit."

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Delaney:** I'm pleased to read a petition sent to me by a group of Lisgar residents, especially Lee Perrin of Lisgar Drive and Munish Sharma of Meadow Forest Drive.

The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established, Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I support the petition, and I'll ask Joshua to carry it down for me.

### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas by imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intentions of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly exempt Legion halls, navy clubs and other non-profit, private or veteran clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

I want to thank Edward Beaven, veterans' services officer of the Royal Canadian Legion, Tottenham branch 329.

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Just to share with my friends across the way, I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for a very important bill to protect anaphylactic students.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I sign my name to this, as Bill 3 is mine.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I sign my name to this and send it to you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I was going to read a Bill 3 petition, but I don't have any copies of it. I support it. We should pass it on a voice vote.

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings):** We have some.

**Mr. Dunlop:** You have some over there? On a voice vote, we could do it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign my name to that.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### ADOPTION INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES ADOPTIONS

**Ms. Pupatello** moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 183, An Act respecting the disclosure of information and records to adopted persons and birth parents / *Projet de loi 183, Loi traitant de la divulgation de renseignements et de dossiers aux personnes adoptées et à leurs pères ou mères de sang.*

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I believe I'll be sharing my hour's leadoff with my colleagues.

This is about Bill 183, the Adoption Information Disclosure Act, 2005. I'm honoured to stand in the Legislature today and speak about Bill 183, a bill that is at the centre of Ontario's plan to bring adoption information laws into the 21st century. For many of us who may not have been paying attention when this bill was brought into the House for first reading, by the time we went to check our e-mails at the end of that day, you knew that Bill 183 had been tabled in this House, because the response was absolutely overwhelming by the community, both birth parents, adoptive parents and adopted adults who responded when they saw the content of this bill.



This legislation would make us a leader across Canada and the world when it comes to providing adult adoptees and birth parents information about their past. It will also reinforce a carefully considered balance of the right to information versus the right to a relationship.

We believe that every individual has the right to know about his or her own personal history. We believe that adult adoptees should have the same rights as non-adopted individuals—the right to know their identity. We believe that individuals who are involved with an adoption should be able to maintain their right to privacy and not be contacted.

Currently, there are 57,000 adopted individuals and birth relatives on the adoption disclosure register waiting to be reunited. Right now, searches continue to reunite families, but that can take up to three years. Last year, only 887 of the adopted individuals and birth relatives on the register were reunited.

We believe that individuals who are trying to learn about their identity and personal history should be able to do so without unnecessary hardship and delay. Our plan would give individuals whose adoptions were finalized in Ontario the right to know about their identity and their history by the following methods: allowing adoptees over the age of 18 to have access to copies of their original birth records that will provide them with their original birth name and may identify birth parents; allowing birth parents to have access to birth records and adoption orders once the adoptee has reached 19; providing the name that the child was given after the adoption; making all disclosure provisions for adoptions finalized in Ontario retroactive to cover all records; and, in exceptional safety-related circumstances, allowing an individual the right to apply a non-disclosure order to prevent identifying information from being released. That, essentially, is the bulk of the bill.

1520

I wanted to take a moment now to let you hear, through my office, some of the responses that we had from people who are clearly involved in this issue. So I wanted to start with the groups, people who wrote and sent e-mails, as I know many of us in this House have received: the adult adoptee.

One of them said, "As an educator, I have had over 30 years in the school system as a teacher, guidance counsellor and principal, and have witnessed the alienation, shame, guilt and obstacles that deny the adoptee to work through their issues developmentally because of a lack of information about themselves. No other member of society is forced to deny and to carry the shame of secrecy that adoption presents."

I have to say to this House and to the members in the gallery who are here listening today that I was overwhelmed by the amount of personal information that people were prepared to share to allow us, as members of this House, to understand what it could possibly be like to have lived in these people's shoes. I think it's important as legislators that we get the sense of that, and I think they were successful.

This fellow said, "I am actively promoting this bill. I am an adult adoptee. I conducted my own search for my biological parents over a span of 20 years. Due to the red tape involved with closed files and secrecy, my search was horrendous, filled with mistaken identities, misinformation and much heartache. My birth mother was unsure as to who my biological father was. She led a very unstable and, frankly, quite different life from mine. This was a heart-wrenching journey. The one thing I came away with that I am absolutely resolute about is the need for adoptees to know their biological background and/or family members."

We have members in the gallery here from an organization called the Coalition for Open Adoption Records, and these individuals have worked for a number of years. I'm very pleased that they're here again today for the second reading of this bill. This was a group, and through their membership, which essentially is thousands across this province, that I would ask some very hard-hitting questions. The letters that I bring to you today are representative of what we heard. So I would ask these folks, "I want to hear what you think. What if you find out that your father's a murderer? What if you find out the most horrendous circumstances of your adoption? Isn't it fair that you should be protected from this?" The answers were quite interesting and very informative for us. They said, "When you don't know, you expect the worst. When you don't know, you assume that's where you come from."

I see Michael smiling. He remembers these questions in particular, because it's pretty hard to answer that question when you haven't lived in those shoes. We've got to talk to people who have lived this experience.

Let me go on: "This is a basic right that most Canadians don't even have to think about. I've applied under the current system to try and obtain anything that might exist in my file." This person wrote to us from Nepean. I can tell you they come from all over Ontario.

A sister wrote, "I know from experience that if it was not for the help of Dwight Duncan"—our colleague from Windsor—St. Clair—as well as her own mother's persistence, "my sister and mother would still be in the dark about their past." It was quite interesting from the sister's perspective, learning that she indeed had a sister.

"I'm a Canadian adoptee, 64, who was still denied the right to personal information." He went on to talk about his birth parents he wanted to find—he was actually assisted in great detail by his adoptive parents, who wanted him to know. "No parent owns their children, be they adopted or not, and the Ontario government has shown the courage, compassion and insight to put an end to the shameful adoption rules that some people are suggesting ought to be perpetuated." He said that it is because of such unselfish love from his adoptive parents that he was able to rise to the absolute top of his profession, and he is grateful for that support.

Another from Windsor: "I am an adult adoptee. I desire access to all my personal information. If you've ever been cornered by doctors, an anaesthesiologist with

a grocery list of questions about your family background, with your daughter's life hanging in the balance, imagine how you would feel when you couldn't answer one of the imperative questions being asked of you." This one gives me some chills, because I met personally with a mom in my community in my constituency office, who brought her little toddler along and shared with me the experience of being in the emergency room with this child who was ill. This mom had been adopted and knew nothing about her personal history.

Now, we are not in the this bill demanding that medical information be turned over. My own mother doesn't need to turn over medical information to me. We are not demanding more of one group or the other; we want it to be the same. But without the right to find out who they are, how can they even ask for medical information? So in instances like this, at least they have an opportunity.

You know, historically, in all of the research we've been able to collect, even when people don't want to be contacted, they are all happy to produce medical information, and they are all answering the questions about the circumstances around the adoption. I think that they inherently understand that need to have information to allow some of that closure for people to get on with life, even when they don't want to be contacted.

A fellow named Ron Murdock has been extremely busy on this issue for a number of years. He's the lobbyist to the UN Commission on the Rights of the Child. It resulted in the written recommendation to Canada by that body to open adoption records. He said, "Adoption is supposed to be in the best interests of the child, not in the best interests of adoptive parents." He went on to say, "My desire to know of my natural parents has nothing to do with dissatisfaction with my adoptive family. In fact, they support me wholeheartedly in my search."

I have to say that the lion's share of comments from adopted children, in fact, indicated that their adoptive parents were more than helpful, really wanted to have that information for the children that they raised.

Interestingly enough, we got e-mails from all over North America. People have been watching this file intently. One wrote to us from the US: "In 1974, I was 18 years old, and six months earlier, I was found by a sister I never knew. My adoptive parents never wanted me to know the truth. The resulting trauma was worse than if my adoptive parents had faced the truth with me as I was growing up." We have so many circumstances, and this is an example where, clearly, the adoptive parents didn't share that information.

But the fact is that without a system, without a structure, people are finding people, and I hope we'll hear more examples of that as other members stand to speak. In this new age of information sharing and technology and access like never before, people are being found. When you talk about that fateful call, that's what we're trying prevent somehow, or somehow government's role is to prevent that fateful call—in the absence of government leadership on this issue, that fateful call is happening today.

At a minimum, we know that we're able to put in motion a no-contact notice so that they'll get the information they need but they won't get the contact that, in fact, they don't want. That's why it's so critical to move forward with this bill, because we believe we are including those safeguards.

Let me go on. Another one said, "I'm an adopted child who needs records to obtain Indian status. Even though I know my birth mother's name and have met the family, I still don't have any records." They need the records, of course, for a whole variety of reasons.

Another said, "I've been successfully reunited with my birth parents and everything has gone extremely well. I am meeting new family members all the time, and I hope to consult with my doctor in the near future to update my medical history." This person wrote about how thrilled she was to read in the newspaper about the potential of passing a law and opening up the records.

This one gives her name and says, "My husband and I would like to thank you for your support. My husband spent the last three years trying to locate his birth mother, and I know the search would be easier if only he knew where he came from."

Another one says, "This bill represents a wonderful change for the better. I just hope it gets passed." She felt compelled to write as an Ontario adoptee, "as is one of my brothers."

Another one said, "It gives such a ray of hope that so few would understand. I, like so many, await the next steps with bated breath. I'm a birth parent who has waited 36 very long years to meet his child."

Another one: "Thank you and God bless you and all of you for the wonderful things you're doing for the adoptive community."

#### 1530

This one comes from Kingsville: "I can't put into words how I feel, but I can say that when I watched on Tuesday, I cried, I was that happy." This is a woman born with cerebral palsy, which affects one side of her body. She went to a doctor who told her that the history would have been helpful in understanding her condition.

Another one from a sister, who said, "My mother lives with the pain every day of not knowing how the child she gave birth to is doing in life. Imagine what she feels like not knowing. Was his life good? Is he happy, healthy? Is he alive? I search crowds all the time, hoping to see a face like mine, and wonder if he does the same. I miss him and we've never met."

"I'm a natural mother wishing for the passage of Bill 183. I was never promised or wanted confidentiality," which is another item that we heard repeatedly through many e-mails. We've tried to bring examples of each of these points. Often we have heard that there was some sense of a promise and there is no record of a promise. The stories are quite different—the experiences that these birth mothers have had.

Another person said, "Heaven forbid that an adoptee should ever need to locate his birth family for urgent reasons. If he does, he'll be dependent on a cash-starved,



ineffective, overburdened governmental system.” Well, we’ll have to talk to him. But he does say, “Adoptees should consider their birth parents their parents. Even though an adoptee does not wish to have direct formal contact, for many birth mothers, just learning that a child is alive and flourishing gives them peace of mind.”

From a brother: “I’m a Queen’s University student currently overseas,” and he’s writing to express his support for the bill. “My brother found our family when I was nine years old and our family was delighted that he did. It was important for him to know his heritage and important for us to know him. My mother’s life-long pain at losing him was ameliorated,” and this through the eyes of a brother. I thought that was quite wonderful.

Another said, “A reunion called up the pain. My daughter looked for me the first opportunity that she had as a freshman in college. She registered on over 60 Web sites. She grew up wondering about me and hoping to know me. We met in 2002 when she turned 21, and our healing from the loss of each other has begun and continues. It is her choice to be whole, to know who she is, to know where she came from. She’s delighted. I’m happily married now for 22 years with five raised children. She expected a street bum. She expected to have me slam the door in her face. Finding me has helped fill the hole in her heart.”

Another, with quite an astounding story that resulted in this individual’s adoption, where a mom died shortly after birth, the father was left with many children, and the youngest then was adopted: “At the age of 49, I can tell you, openness, honesty and respect for all parties in adoption are far better than lies, deceit, fear and hate. I have no romantic fantasies; I have reality. I love all of the parents I have. They have all contributed to shape the person that I am.” I thought that was a remarkable story.

Let me say, on the part of birth mothers and birth fathers as well: Can we even think for a moment what life was like for them? I don’t know we can. I just wanted to let you know from my perspective that it meant so much to see the letter read, that we responded to the *Toronto Star*: “It means for me that some day I may know something of my 44-year-old son. Surrendering him to adoption in 1961 is the most painful and difficult thing I’ve had to do in my 64 years on this earth. Words can’t express my gratitude for what you’ve done. Although I now live in BC, my son was born in Toronto.”

This from Grafton, Ontario: “Please do not give in to the naysayers who are campaigning against this bill. There was no promise of confidentiality to natural birth mothers. Not one single shred of evidence to support such a promise has ever been produced. It’s one of those tired, old-worn urban legends that never goes away. Thank you for having the courage to right a long-time wrong.”

This one came to us from Vancouver: “I opened my newspaper in Vancouver and was emotionally overwhelmed and elated to find that Ontario was introducing a bill to open adoption records for adult adoptees and

birth parents. I cried tears of hope and joy all day. At 16 years of age, I gave birth to a daughter that I carried in my body for nine months but never had the chance to see, touch, hold or tell how much she meant to me. Please give me this opportunity now. My daughter is in her 30s, and I have been waiting my whole life to tell her the story of her birth.” I think that’s quite compelling.

Another wrote, “As for birth mother confidentiality, I can assure you that when I placed my daughter for adoption, I was never offered, nor did I request, that my identity be hidden from her. It was not even mentioned in the documents I signed. In fact, I fully expected to meet her when she turned 18, as I was promised by the social worker who arranged the adoption.” That makes quite a struggle for people who now have to listen to the notion that there was some level of confidentiality there.

Another wrote, “This new bill will help many others find the joy that I have found on reuniting with my son. This will make many people happy and keep many more alive with vital medical information. This is also justice for adoption fraud victims. It means a lot to them as well. You will make the UN proud.”

Another said, “As a natural mother and one who has helped others reunite with their lost children, I thank you. Your support is deeply appreciated and heartwarming.”

Another said, “It will give me great peace to know who my daughter is, even in the event that she does not wish to meet me. It is very comforting for me to know that in this legislation, birth parents have not been rejected further or forgotten.”

Another said, “I have a number of medical problems that I feel my daughter should know about. Now I may be able to contact her. My mother went to her grave hoping that one day she would get a knock on her door and it would be her first grandchild. It’s too late for my mom, but not for me, my son and the rest of my family to be able to meet the daughter, sister and niece. My only wish is that she is happy and healthy. If she chooses not to be contacted, so be it.”

Another said, “I lost my first-born son to adoption in 1965 in Ontario and was reunited with him in July, through no help of the Ontario government, I might add. Every person has the right to know his or her roots, and mothers/fathers should have the right to know the whereabouts of their child. No government should hold a control over people such as has been done with the adoption industry. I hope this bill proceeds and culminates in being passed. It will be truly a victorious day for parents and children affected by adoption laws.”

Another said, “I was promised that my child would be able to find me when he was of age.” This woman goes on to struggle with the notion that now people are suggesting that she had been promised confidentiality.

Another summary of comments:

“Years and years of hard work.” “Tears of joy for a job well done.” “I watched through tearful eyes as the bill was introduced today.” “I wept when watching this announcement.” “Tears of joy and relief.” “I think it’s wonderful that at last it’s no longer a private member’s bill, and hopefully it will pass into law. Thank you.”

Another said, "I am sooooo excited"—with about six o's—"about what is happening today here in Ontario. Last night it was funny, because I knew about today and I couldn't get to sleep. I was like a child on Christmas Eve. Whenever I think about adoption, I go right back into little-kid mode, wanting to know where I came from. I'm sitting here crying just thinking about what's happening."

There were a number of other commentaries, much along the same lines, but every story is certainly different. What's important about these next few—and the reason I selected them is that it's not just about the children and it isn't just about the birth parents; it's also about the adoptive parents, because they're an extremely important part of this whole piece, and here is what some of these have said:

"We are adoptive parents of a young child. We just adopted last year in Ontario through the CAS and have an open relationship with some members of our son's biological family. The information we have gained through these relationships is invaluable to us and our son. I cannot imagine not having this information."

1540

"I'm an adoptive parent. My daughter and son were adopted in the 1960s and 1970s and now are young adults. I believe it's every child's birthright to know their heritage and their health background. I believe it's a basic human right."

Another said, "As a mother by adoption, I want for our child access to the same information that the rest of us take for granted. Who is he? Where does he come from? I don't feel that my role is in any way trivialized by a connection with the woman who gave birth to him. In fact, we honour her for her decision." I thought that was very well put.

Another was quite a story about the steps that someone had to go through to finally connect with his family. I think I pulled this because he was adopted as a child and then became an adoptive parent himself. What was interesting is that he's continued to make all of these connections in the absence of any government leadership. The difficulties that they face in doing so—running literally halfway around the world, trying to make these connections with so little information; following any little clue and then finding out the information is wrong—it's been a real struggle for people, and they've won anyway. In many instances, we've made it extremely difficult, but in the end, they are finding people. I think it is our job to make that process easier.

This is from an adoptive parent: "I have witnessed first-hand the remarkable benefits of a growing relationship between our adopted daughter and her birth mother. We are a stronger family as a result." I thought that was quite important.

We do believe that individuals who are involved with an adoption should be able to maintain their right to privacy and not be contacted. I just have to get to the balance of my speech. We also have to acknowledge in this that we have had some commentary from the Privacy Commissioner, so I'd like to address that directly.

No-contact provisions are used in British Columbia, Alberta and Newfoundland. I'd like to point out to the House that we're not aware of any individual breaching a no-contact notice anywhere in Canada. When a person files a no-contact notice, they would be asked to fill out a form that voluntarily requests family history, medical information and reasons for filing the no-contact notice.

I'd also like to point out that while an individual would not be required to provide their medical history, it's the right thing to do, and we would encourage them to do that. Even in situations where an individual does not want contact, we can't find a situation where they still didn't turn over that information that they just knew was going to be important to that child.

When we were developing this legislation, we did consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian. We did this even though records relating to adoption fall outside the privacy commissioner's jurisdiction. As a result, we included some changes to our bill. Initially, for example, the proposed legislation didn't allow for limits to the disclosure. Now, the adoptees would be able to apply for non-disclosure orders if they believe that disclosure could result in significant harm. Furthermore, the provisions have been expanded to include both physical and emotional harm.

I want to thank the privacy commissioner once again for her remarks. Many have suggested that her remarks were too strong. We have been copied on much of the correspondence that the privacy commissioner has received. People need to understand that this is her job. It is her role to vet and study every single aspect of anything that has something to do with privacy issues. So we just have to keep those remarks in perspective. Her role does fall outside of this mandate where adoptions are concerned, but we very much respect her opinion. I personally believe that we are moving in the right direction.

Let me just finish in a summary.

Social policy is an opinion. There is no right and there is no wrong. This is very important when it comes to those who are standing up squarely on one side or the other. Can we acknowledge that it's our opinion, that we think we're doing the right thing? Fifty or 60 years ago, they thought they were doing the right thing, and they were doing the opposite in terms of where we want to go today.

I believe that people have a right to know where they come from, not a right to a relationship. We've repeated this several times because it's so important. People have a right to know where they come from, but they don't have a right to a relationship. The privacy commissioner is doing her job when she speaks for a minority, as small as that may be: those who wish not to be contacted. We've been careful. The no-contact notice has worked elsewhere. The fines are extremely high if that no-contact is ever breached. There is no record of a breach that we can find.

Ultimately there would be no purpose to this bill if it was not retroactive: I have to stand firmly on this point. Why would we bring an adoption bill in the House at all



if we were not going to contend with 250,000 adoption records already in Ontario? There really wouldn't be a point to this. Adoptions today are virtually well known, the information is extremely well known and it isn't guarded under that kind of shroud of secrecy, as was the case in the 1920s.

I asked adoptees the hard questions: "What if you're not welcome? What if your history is horrible?" They've given me the straight answers. Currently, with a lack of information about themselves, that's what they believe, yet overwhelmingly we have heard from people where it's gone very well. There has been a tremendous respect for privacy, and people who have either been the birth mother or the adopted child understand the secrecy more than the rest of us because they've been living with this for many years. If there's ever going to be a group that understands the mechanics of no-contact, I can tell you with some certainty that this is the group.

I know we've all been inundated with calls and e-mails. I want to thank people for their interest. This is really important, and I think it merits the kind of debate we have to have around these issues. This bill will have hearings. I hope we're going to have good representation and depositions speaking at our hearings. I'm going to welcome additional improvements. If we feel there will be amendments that can improve this bill, we are prepared to hear them. I say this with an interest in bringing forward good legislation and being prepared to improve it.

Let me just say that I believe we're moving in the right area in terms of social policy on the matter of adoption. I believe in retroactivity. I believe we can't have a disclosure veto because it defeats the purpose of allowing people the right to know who they are. I understand those who have made the comparison to trampling the rights of birth mothers, maybe, but I have to say that at some point people have to understand that for many years we've trampled on the rights of those individuals who have a right to know who they are and where they come from. I hope all members of this House will do due diligence and help us make this bill law.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Questions and comments? Questions and comments? The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't in my seat. I thought the minister said earlier in her comments that the parliamentary assistant was also speaking to the bill.

I look forward to the comments from all the members in this House today on this piece of legislation. I know the member from Toronto-Danforth in particular has had a great deal of interest in this bill. She has brought a number of private member's bills here. In my discussions with the member from Toronto-Danforth, I know she has some very strong concerns about this legislation and will be bringing forth amendments to the legislation when we get to committee with it.

My comments now are very brief. I just wanted to put on the record that I look forward to further debate and to

the government listening to the possible amendments that come forward.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I think there's an adage that if at first you don't succeed, try, try again, and I tried and I tried. I tried five times through private members' hour to get an adoption disclosure bill passed in this Legislature. What was really striking to me then, under a Conservative government, was that the majority of members in the House, all of the times I presented my bill, supported adoption disclosure reform, and yet we were unable to get it passed because of all the funny business that goes on around here during private members' hour.

**1550**

What struck me considerably—and I think it's still the case—is that the majority of legislators from all parties support moving forward on adoption disclosure reform. I know that all of my caucus colleagues support the bill. I know that there are perhaps some people still within the Liberal Party and within the Conservative Party who have some issues and problems. I also know from discussing the issue with most of the members by now and sending them letters and my personal story that there is widespread support for this legislation, and has been for a long time. In fact, it's a good example of where the legislators overall generally reflect the will of the people, because research has shown that the majority of people do support moving forward, and have for a very long time, on adoption disclosure reform for all the reasons and more, which I will take some time to outline later when I get to speak. It really is a very, very happy day for me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for—

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Prince Edward-Hastings.

**The Deputy Speaker:**—Prince Edward-Hastings.

**Mr. Parsons:** Just remember, "a prince of a fellow."

I could not imagine two years ago that I would stand up and speak in support of this bill. As an adoptive parent and as a former children's aid board member and president, I had concerns raised with me. But Ms. Churley's bill, when we debated it, caused a significant number of people to contact me in the following weeks and months, people who very eloquently and very passionately made a case for an adoption disclosure law.

Maybe it's a factor of age, but as I get older, I find I am more interested in my roots, in my heritage and in my past and my family's past, and it struck me that, although I'm able to sit down and research three and four and five generations back, not everyone in this province is able to do that, yet there is a very fundamental right that struck me, that a person is entitled to know where they come from.

So I support this bill. I believe that it provides some full citizenship and full rights to people in this province that were not recognized, and I need to compliment the advocates for this bill who have come forward. I suspect it has been a very difficult road. I know it has been a very difficult road that they have walked to get support for it,

but they made their case and they made it well. So it will be my pleasure to support a bill that I believe unlocks some doors. Not everything they find may be what they hope to find, but I have blood relatives I'm not really proud of. That's part of life. That's part of humanity, and I think each one of us is entitled to know.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister, you have two minutes to reply.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I know the people from the Niagara area saw a wonderful article in the *Standard* and a photo of Pat Milliken of Niagara Falls. She reminds me of people I've met in my own home riding and, I think, many of us in this House have met in our ridings.

Pat Milliken took a tremendous amount of courage to come forward and be so public in her local community on the issue of adoption, looking for her son. She is undergoing some surgery, maybe today, and she was really worried. I think as you get older and things happen, you start thinking of your own mortality, realizing what you want to be able to tell your kids if you could. It becomes very emotional, and I think the membership in this House will see that and feel that as you meet people and understand their experiences.

A woman named Val Showers has been a long-time advocate in my area, who has headed up the organization, desperate to assist in the reuniting of children and their birth parents. Over the years, I've met a number of people who have been in that position.

I can tell you that as people become informed, I think in this day and age, we start landing on the right side of this issue. I appreciate that there are going to be concerns. I have personally spoken with adoptive parents who are afraid of this and adopted children who are very afraid of this.

I think we've got to be clear: We've got to stand on a record of human behaviour around the world on this matter. We don't have a history of people breaching that no-contact; we do have a history of tremendous stories of the human spirit. I think that if our government is going to do something well, it's going to do something that's going to encourage that great human spirit.

Let me just say, on behalf of all the members in this House, that I applaud those who have been working so hard and so long with us. I hope that by the end of third reading and our hearings, we're going to have a bill that becomes law.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** At the outset, let me say I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this debate. I believe, as I went through my Hansard records, it's the sixth time that I've spoken in the House on this issue since 1985, when I was first elected.

The issue around adoption and access to information touches many Ontarians' lives. When I reflect back on my first instance, my first recollection was of being a very young child when my father informed me that our grandmother, Florence Cross, died in childbirth delivering her ninth child, but that the child lived and that I had an aunt somewhere in Toronto, which I thought was

totally cool but totally unfair. Now that I only have one of my late father's siblings still alive, my aunt Betty here in Toronto, who herself has been involved in this issue—I have two aunts in Toronto, but I only know one. I consider that part of the emptiness a lot of people feel. I realize that kind of relationship isn't as deep and as significant as that of a child and a parent, but still, family is family.

As I proceeded with my political career, I found out, with the very first piece of legislation on adoption disclosure, just by conversation, that all three of my staff in my constituency office—again, I'm going back 19 years—either were adoptees or had adopted. So there was this opportunity to be sensitized not only in a more direct way by individuals I think very highly of and care for, but they, by extension, were providing additional counselling and support, offering assistance to many young people and parents who were trying to navigate through a very difficult, troublesome system to gain access to information about their loved ones who were put up for adoption.

For me, this has been an issue I have strongly supported historically, and will continue to with this legislation. As I was commenting when the minister tabled the bill in the Legislature, I expressed some concern about some areas where we would need to have further clarification. You can appreciate that, having participated with at least five other different pieces of legislation, this now being the sixth, there are variations throughout that legislation. Those were born out of the consultative process and out of discussions with organizations and individuals who care very deeply about these reforms and moving them forward in Ontario.

1600

There are several variances in this legislation that need to be considered, which is why there will be a public hearings process, a couple of days of committee. It has yet to be determined how far and for how long, but a timely conclusion to this bill in this session is in order. The bottom line is that we still need some clarification on some of these issues from groups that have overwhelmingly embraced the legislation on its fundamental principles of retroactivity and a no-contact veto instead of a disclosure veto. Those were two victories in terms of moving this legislation forward, but there is a tremendous number of information and process kinds of questions that remain unanswered.

Again, I raised that concern in the Legislature when I asked the minister to comment directly on what the costs were that were associated—not that costs are a problem. Costs are a problem if the government is not prepared to commit the dollars; costs are a problem when the resources necessary to make the legislation work are not committed. That is a legitimate question to be raising, because we have raised expectations in the adoption community that the system, the legislation, will actually work in terms of practicality and application out there in the daily lives of both government and the public who turn to the government to receive those services in a timely manner.



Many members would be aware that the current government has a serious spending problem. That problem can be identified in this simple statistic: Three years ago, spending in the province of Ontario was at \$63 billion dollars; today it's over \$80 billion, in just three years. That is before we pass this legislation and call yet again on the treasurer to free up the necessary money, which would be substantive, because this is a major change in the direction and manner in which a ministry operates in the province.

There are other practical challenges in terms of linking it to other provinces and the supports we would provide for Ontario residents seeking adoptees who have left the province, and so on and so forth.

We do not know any of this information at the moment. Efforts to date to get some kind of response about what the plan is have been unsuccessful. In fact, we asked in a fashion that it should have been forthcoming from the minister, but we have been unsuccessful. I think those are the kinds of issues that will be raised in the public hearings so the adoption community can clearly find out what the level of commitment is.

For the purpose of today's debate on second reading, it's important that we put on the record many of the concerns that are being expressed, but it's more important that we put on the record what I believe will ultimately be a high degree of all-party support. I can't speak for all of my colleagues at the moment, because historically and traditionally we wait until after we've had an opportunity to look at amendments. I know my colleague from Toronto—Danforth has some amendments, and I have been contacted by some in the adoption community requesting support for some amendments as well. Then, upon those changes, we'll have a finished bill ready to go to the floor of the Legislature for third and final reading. It's when that occurs that I'll be able to comment more directly about the support of our party.

But I can say that under the leadership of John Tory, our new leader, he has encouraged members to vote according to their conscience and the wishes of their constituents. I know that many have expressed support on the record for this legislation, and we'll have an opportunity during this debate to hear more directly from them as to their support for this legislation.

Much has been said and much will be said about my colleague from Toronto—Danforth's long-standing advocacy in this area, and I'm pleased that I have been standing shoulder to shoulder with her. In fact, I tabled one piece of legislation myself as a private member, a private member's bill, many years ago. It's important that I remind my constituents that I have been rather consistent on this issue and therefore feel strongly about it moving forward.

I was able to pull out some of the Hansard comments from these various debates. One defining feature of this legislation is that it's always debated in the Legislature around Mother's Day. When I was looked through my files and pulled up the records of my comments in each of the years, it's always around this time of the year that

we find ourselves debating this as we move closer and closer to Mother's Day and its obvious importance and affiliation with this important reform in our province.

I'm looking at Hansard from May 12, 1994, 11 years ago, wherein I made a comment—I'm just going to read briefly from that Hansard:

"I am very pleased that we'll have an opportunity today to devote an hour to debating private member's Bill 158 dealing with adoption disclosure and amendments to the various acts in Ontario.

"I am going to be supporting this bill, as I have consistently indicated, both personally and on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, our support for these reforms for so many adoptees in this province."

I went on to comment about the unusual anomaly that we were having difficulty finding a government that would proceed, with the support of a minister, to move forward. As I went on in my speech at that time, I made reference to the fact that the previous three governments had failed to move forward on it, and we can now add two more to the list.

I want to thank the minister for bringing this forward and finding the legislative time in her government's calendar, because that's generally one of the challenging features. I can fondly remember sitting in cabinet when the question was reversed on us: "Of your four bills, which are the most important ones you're bringing forward?" You see, when you bring forward one or two, you have to put two or three others back into the queue. The minister has made a conscious decision to move this forward. For those less informed of the procedures around here and in cabinet, that is very much one of the challenges a minister has. That's an immediate concern. The long-term concern, of course, is when an entire government goes through its mandate and fails to do what it said it might do while in opposition.

We have been using the method of a private member's bill to deal with these reforms, and this caused a considerable amount of concern to advocates. I fondly remember the concern of Holly Kramer, because we had worked very hard to try and get the bill passed in the past. She's an activist with Parent Finders Inc. She certainly didn't have any trouble finding her way to my door 20 years ago to encourage me to work for and advocate on behalf of adoptees in our province, and it's something about which I've been able to maintain contact with Holly over those years.

I doubt members will want to read my entire speech from Hansard on May 12, 1994, but I also raised some concerns about specific cases. The minister herself has raised many good-news letters from families. I had one that I read into the record that involved my own constituent, and I'm going to read briefly from that:

"I have a case that I brought to the Minister of Health's attention, not that this is a typical case"—and it certainly wasn't—"but a case where an eight-year-old child in my constituency"—the children's aid society had not disclosed properly to the adoptive family the nature of the child's condition and the family history. It had

asserted that the child had come from a healthy, happy family and that there were no medical problems. This child, who is a constituent of mine, is suffering serious problems with his health, and "what we've been able to uncover by finding the birth parent—the mother's 28 years old, she's confined to a wheelchair and she's gravely ill, the father was a persistent drug user. This information at the time of adoption, if it had been shared, may have changed the parents' minds in terms of adopting, but more importantly, it holds the key" to their understanding of their child's medical problems and conditions.

1610

Again, the minister would be familiar with the day she tabled the bill and my express desire to support legislation that allows for greater access to medical records. I think that's a critically important issue here. It's a compelling argument, especially now, with the way health care has such tremendous abilities, through research, genetic coding and so on, to unlock some of the health challenges for many of our citizens. As our technology, medical treatment and research improve, people are going to be able to benefit more greatly with this knowledge. It becomes an instrument of their better health outcomes and a better understanding of some of their challenges.

I'm aware of another family where there were mental health issues with a child who was adopted. Once there was a match made, it was a lot clearer why some of these problems were inherent in this child. The family was able to work, through counselling and other methods, to ensure that the path to greater health was accelerated with the importance of shared knowledge about the child's birth parents.

This is a very important part of this legislation, and through the process of amendments and of public hearings, we should be in a much stronger and better position to make sure that this particular legislation achieves as much as we hope it will. That is an important feature which I personally support, and I know many of my colleagues in the Conservative caucus have indicated that this is an important part of the legislation that they'd like to see move forward.

I mentioned a bit about counselling. My colleague from the NDP, the member for Toronto–Danforth, has put her mind around the issue of counselling. I know that the current bill eliminates it completely, and I'm not 100% sure that that's the very best decision for the government to make. I know that Ms. Churley's past bills included, based on very wise advice from Parent Finders and other organizations that advocate on behalf of families, that counselling be made available.

The question is the mandatory nature which is currently contained in the legislation. I don't think that making it mandatory is as helpful as making it optional for those families who need it. Clearly, if families get into a situation—I'm talking in the future—where they find themselves repatriated with the information and a match with a family member, then you would find a

situation where the records are shared with both parties. There are some families who will need counselling supports and won't necessarily be able to afford it, or they may get well into the process and find themselves in difficulty and in need of support.

I remember a case where we were helping a family with just the personality differences alone: two sisters finding their birth mother, and none of them knew the other. In the process of making all the connections, one had a tremendously positive experience and another one had a very negative one. I remember them coming to my constituency office and sharing that with me. Of course, counselling was available, which was very good. But these young women did not have the means to provide for their own counselling out of their own pocket. That has to be a concern. We need to have some assurances that that kind of counselling will be available for those families and individuals who require it.

Again, in the absence of the minister giving us any clear information about costs or commitments in this and any future budget years to assist this process to make it occur more efficiently, more effectively and with a greater degree of compassion, then we really need to have some input from the adoption community about this issue of counselling. There is very little in the e-mails, letters and correspondence I've received over the course of the last month that addresses that important issue. I know my colleague from Toronto–Danforth will be speaking to that at greater length, not only because she has listened well to the community who advised her but because she has also gone through the process herself.

The other point she will stress, and I will too, is that you don't want the counselling to become an impediment to processing the connection and to the ability of a birth parent and an adoptee to connect. Removing it completely obviously will not interfere with this in time, but it will create some impediments. If it is optional, I wouldn't want to see it slowing down the process. We have to put our minds around just exactly how we would do that. Generally, that means, will we commit sufficient resources both to process the application and the records and also to provide the actual counselling itself? Again, we will be calling upon the minister to clarify that point and to make some degree of commitment for this legislation.

I've raised the issue of how soon would there be proclamation after the bill is passed, and when can adoptees and birth parents know they can begin tapping into the process to get the process to work for them? The waiting lists are still very long under the current process, so there are backlogs. That's one issue. Those backlogs exist because the resources are still not committed in substantive form. I know when our Comsoc minister, back in 2000 or 2001, committed an additional almost \$3 million to assist with clearing up the backlog, it was rather helpful. But once those backlogs are shortened, they generally start creeping up and getting longer again if you don't provide multi-year financial commitments to that department to assist with making connections. This



is an area where we really want to make sure we've done our due diligence and we're able to determine that the level of commitment financially will allow this bill to proceed in a predictable way that is helpful for both birth parents and adoptees who are seeking information and seeking to make a match and a contact.

There are several other issues. I read the story about the children's aid society and the disclosure issue. I want to raise another part of that, and that is the issue of litigation. There have been cases where information contained in the records or information that eventually may come to light is contrary to the information in the adoption records, and this opens the door for a substantial amount of access to litigation.

1620

Now, litigation exists in just about all aspects of human relations, and this is no different. However, the experience in the courts to date is very limited, and it is limited in part by the very nature that there are so many hurdles to go through in order to make a match and there is the issue of the disclosure veto that has historically been in place and so on and so forth. So there is concern that there may be some approaches to litigation as a result of the information that does come out.

A lot of people are not talking about this, nor do I expect them to. The CAS—the children's aid societies—if they are concerned about it, they are not saying anything. If they are concerned about it, they are not really stating it publicly. But for those of us who have had families that we've worked with over the years, this issue has come forward. There have been a couple of cases that have been in our courts, dealing with information that wasn't matched in a honest way. The results of those court cases have been rather costly for the agencies involved. So, again, I hope that we'll be able to discuss this. In no way is it going to interfere with the progress of the bill and in no way will it, in effect, cause the bill to be radically changed. But I think it's important that we put on the record some of the concerns, because there are exposure issues for some of the agencies.

The final issue that I want to raise is the one that I raised with the minister in the House. I want to clarify, as I believe I did with my question, that I thought it was a rather unusual manner in which the minister, in tabling the bill, cast in a political way the suggestion, by association, that Ontario's privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, would have loved to be in the House that day but she couldn't, but sent somebody else. So there were many of us who were rather surprised to read on her Web site the very next day concerns with this bill.

I want to say for the record, as I have all along, that I'm prepared to support the principle of retroactivity. I don't have a problem with that. I'm having a slight problem with the issue of the no-contact veto versus a disclosure veto, but I will probably end up supporting the bill with some minor amendments as it's currently contained.

However, my question to the minister was one in which I felt that, in her enthusiasm, she had been less

than forthright with the issues. I think that is part of the debate. It will be part of the discussions that will occur when we go to public hearings, and then clause-by-clause debate and vote, before we go to third reading in the House.

The chief commissioner's Web site makes it very clear why she is concerned. But I want to state as well for persons who are watching this debate at home that the commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, can in no way impact this legislation prior to its being passed. Her role and her function is such that she is able to comment on this legislation, and she has done so—quite frankly, by the invitation of the minister. She does not have the power or the authority currently in her mandate to say to the government, "You cannot proceed." She simply gives her advice and that of her lawyers in the privacy commission, and she has put on the record some very important concerns. They have to be considered, although as I say, I don't think that they, in and of themselves, constitute a reason not to support the legislation.

Here's what her Web site had to say briefly:

"A new bill tabled today on adoption disclosure can lead to thousands of Ontarians having their privacy invaded, says Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian.

"Going from this day forward, with everyone aware of the rules, I am in favour of openness in adoptions," said the commissioner. 'But retroactively changing the rules and exposing the identities of birth parents who entered into the adoption process in an era when secrecy was the norm can have major repercussions.'

"I keep thinking," said the commissioner, 'of the young girls who gave a baby up for adoption 20 years ago thinking they were safe, and never thinking that a government would reveal their secrets. Birth parents cannot simply be ignored—they have rights, too.'"

For those who want to check the Web site, it was quite informative, because the commissioner goes on to say that she is "urging Community and Social Services Minister Sandra Pupatello to amend the bill to give birth parents and adoptees the right to file a 'disclosure veto.'" It goes on to say that the following provinces, "Quebec, Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick have laws where disclosure of adoption information is based on consent;

"In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, consent is required for disclosure related to adoptions that took place before new adoption laws were introduced. And disclosure vetoes may be filed for information related to adoptions since the time of the new laws."

It was British Columbia, Alberta and Newfoundland that "are the only three provinces where adoption legislation is applied retroactively, but even here, each of these provinces provides for disclosure vetoes for earlier adoptions—exactly what Commissioner Cavoukian is proposing that Ontario do. Nowhere in Canada are the rights of birth parents completely ignored."

Again, that is the minister's or—I keep calling her minister—Commissioner Cavoukian's advice, with her

civil rights lawyers in her department, and that's fine. It can be there to guide the government.

As I say, personally, I'm not prepared to vote against the legislation based on her advice. What I was concerned about was that the presentation in the House on the day it was tabled implied that the privacy commissioner, in some fashion, was supporting the legislation. I just felt that was politically inappropriate and unnecessary, frankly, to complicate this bill.

Obviously there has been resistance from the civil service. There has been resistance from groups over the years, or else this legislation would have been passed years ago. That's a fact, but I'm sure someone's going to suggest that the Information and Privacy Commissioner is a relatively new phenomenon in Ontario, and privacy legislation has only been entrenched in law in this province for the last few years.

Here we have a case where we have codified and identified protection in our laws, and yet we have one here where the commissioner is saying, "Please proceed with caution and I strongly encourage you to amend it."

The minister cited as her example that we would be a world leader, and I said to her that I would work with her to make this world-class legislation. I'm prepared to do that.

She cited that, "New South Wales in Australia has been cited as an example where a retroactive adoption law was put into place with unqualified access. Yet, two years after that law came into effect, the New South Wales Law Reform Commission reported that a 'significant minority' of birth parents felt the law violated their privacy; that a 'significant minority' of adoptees disapproved of the law; and that a 'majority' of adoptive parents were opposed to the law. (As well, a year after New South Wales brought in its law, Queensland, another Australian state, brought in an adoption law with core principles similar to what Commissioner Cavoukian was advocating.

The privacy commissioner is bringing to our attention some of the information that the minister hasn't been forthcoming with. I understand the importance of her putting her best foot forward on legislation under her sponsorship, but I don't think it's helpful to the debate to suggest that there are not some concerns being expressed.

1630

Although I will be supporting the bill, I think it's important that all issues are put on the table. I'm sure that when the minister presented to cabinet her slide deck filled with her recommendations, there would have been a full disclosure of some of these concerns: from the privacy commissioner, some of the litigation issues I have referenced, and the comparators as to why other jurisdictions have proceeded very cautiously with retroactivity, that the one example in the world that we're aware of has had some difficulty with it.

To the extent that we can make this legislation have fewer problems, that is the purpose of having public hearings, brief as they may be: to ensure that these concerns are raised and to afford an opportunity for the

government and the adoptive community to work out solutions that will work better here in Ontario.

I've commented for the record about some of the concerns. I'd be less than frank if I didn't say that there were some concerns from members of my caucus about the issues Commissioner Cavoukian has raised. I will leave it up to them to express their own personal view in the matter. As I say, for myself, I've waited quite a long time to have a piece of legislation that we can approve, that will provide access to records. Not making it retroactive, in my opinion, would not serve the thousands and thousands of individuals out there who are today having difficulty navigating through the bureaucracy and the disclosure vetoes and the impediments to information that they have historically had to cope with.

I really believe this is a positive step forward. Clearly, it won't be without controversy and it won't be without some difficulty for some families, but frankly, that has been the experience to this point. Not every one of the contacts that are made works out well for families. But it is a fundamental right for individuals to know more about themselves, for both sides of the equation: for those persons who went through the very difficult decision to give up a child for adoption. Those reasons form a long list, they are complex and deeply personal, and I dare say they are carried inside their hearts for the rest of their lives. It becomes incredibly important that we look at legislation that has the effect not only of making the match but of healing the part of that process that has been difficult for so many mothers, and for the birth fathers also, who found that respecting the wishes of the mother—for a whole series of reasons, they too were disconnected from knowing their child or from having access to their child.

For that reason, I will be supporting this legislation. I will be participating in the public hearings, actively participating. I expect we will hear more comments from the adoption community. We strongly recommend that they make some of the other issues in this legislation better known to us as legislators. We get your top-line messaging that you like the bill, that you like the retroactivity for all records and that you prefer the no-contact rule versus the disclosure veto that has historically been in all legislation in Canada, certainly in the past for us here in Ontario. I encourage the wider community to let us know about other issues in this bill that need to be considered.

A substantive amount of legislation is being deleted from the books. We are going to be relying rather heavily on regulations as this gets implemented. We would hope that the government will come forward and let the adoption community, as well as all MPPs in this chamber, know more and more information about what is actually planned by the government.

In the final analysis, I'd like to add my voice and my vote in support of adoption rights in the province of Ontario. It's long overdue. I think the community has been patient with far too many governments, and the credit really is due to their persistence and their compassion and their simple desire to be connected to a loved



one in the time they have. I will be supporting the bill and I thank the members for the opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Churley:** I'll have an opportunity to speak to this bill in a few minutes. I'll just say now that I thank the member.

I know I make it sound like I think it's my bill—I can't help it, because I've made so many attempts to get a bill through—but it is a government bill. I will be talking about my support of the bill but also about some of the amendments I would like to see made. With any bill that's brought forward, there are always improvements to be made. I will be expressing my views on what I consider to be some problems with the bill and how we might find ways, working with representatives of the adoption community, the leaders I've worked with for many years, who are all sitting here, to make some improvements.

I am one of those who would like to make these improvements and get the bill passed rather quickly, because I know that after the bill is passed there is still an awful lot of work to be done to change a system that's been in place for a very long time and that, we will all agree, has not been working very well. It's archaic and outdated and is just not relevant in today's society. To change that and ensure that the resources are there to change it, to ensure that some of the flaws in the bill are fixed so that all the information that adoptees and birth parents need to conduct searches is available—these are things we have to work on, and we all know that.

But we finally have at least a starting point. I think it's really important that we get through this bill in a reasonable way, that we get it to committee, get some amendments in and get it back to the House and hopefully have it passed so it doesn't end up as some kind of bargaining chip at the end of the session, which is usually what happened with my private member's bills in the past. We're not going to let that happen, are we? It's not fair to the community and to all of those people who have been working on this bill for so long.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** I'm certainly pleased to rise in support of Bill 183. I wanted to comment on a few of the things that the member from Burlington said in his support of this bill, just to set the record straight. I have worked extensively with the minister's staff, with community and social services. I must say that I have always found their staff to be very supportive, answering all my questions, and very helpful. I say to the member from Burlington, maybe it's just a communication gap with his own staff. Sometimes, if we just ask a few more questions, we can overcome these things. I know, speaking from my own experiences, how wonderful the minister's staff has been to work with.

1640

With regard to the mandatory counselling—I'm sure this will come up as clause-by-clause is dealt with—one of the things I would like to say is that I have found, talking to my constituents in Huron-Bruce, there are concerns raised about this. Making it mandatory, they

feel, is not dealing with it in a manner that they are supportive of. It should be up to the adult to determine if in fact they want counselling or not, and those services would be available within the community.

Just to set the record straight, I want to make a comment about New South Wales. After the two-year review, what changed? I can tell you: Nothing changed. That, in my mind, speaks volumes about what they did in New South Wales, even after an extensive two-year review.

I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to this bill. Once again, I do want to say how strongly supportive I am of this bill.

**Mr. Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to rise to make a few comments on the member from Burlington's lead-off speech on the second reading of Bill 183, the adoption disclosure bill. He mentioned a couple of times during his comments his interest in this particular bill and the number of times he's spoken in this House over the years on adoption disclosure and what a sensitive issue it is.

I think what's important here today, as we work our way through the lead-off speeches and look toward further debate in this House, is the fact that we do know that some members of this House, some members of the opposition, have some concerns with the legislation. They certainly will be bringing forth amendments. We really want the government to seriously look at any of those amendments and to have a good debate. If there are going to be amendments to a bill of this magnitude, we want to make sure the bill is passed and it's accepted, and that we get the bill right. I think that's what's really important.

I thank the member from Burlington for his comments, because he made some excellent points on the bill itself, but I also look forward to the member from Toronto-Danforth, who will be speaking in a few moments. She has a number of key points that she would like to see addressed in the bill. I've supported the member from Toronto-Danforth in her private member's bills in the past.

I look forward to the debate in this House and to committee hearings that will actually see the amendments listened to. I hope we're not going to gang up on everybody here and just pass a government bill, when there are people with a lot of concerns about this legislation who would like to see proper amendments put in place making sure that the government gets this bill right. I appreciate this opportunity to say these comments right now.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak for just a moment. I want to go back in history to when I was in opposition, in general government committee, and the member from Toronto-Danforth put forward a private member's bill. We did have a nice talk, not just at the committee level. The good doctor in the visitors' gallery made a deputation; quite a few people made deputations.

After listening to the human story behind this issue, it was almost impossible for me to look these people in the eye and say we shouldn't be doing something. It made

perfect sense to me that we have to find a way for this human story to come back into this place. We've talked about that at private members' hour; we've talked about that at this legislative level.

I want to get the right legislation out there, and I think the debate should be based on the premise of where we want to be and how to make it better, instead of any side scoring points on whether it's wrong or it's right. What we should be doing is having the discussion about this fundamental flaw in our society and moving it forward. I commend the member, as I have been talking with her over the years about her attempts. The member from Burlington—the same thing: making the attempt to try to address this human story. I think that far too often we forget the nuances of the lives of the people who have been affected. In my listening carefully to those stories, I couldn't help but be affected and understand that something needs to be done.

I encourage us all to take it as a foundation and move forward, not finding fault for the sake of finding fault, but finding improvements to make an even better piece of legislation. By doing that, with all the people who are advising us, I am convinced we can come up with legislation that puts this thing to rest.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Burlington, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Jackson:** I want to thank those for commenting.

I want to remind the member for Huron—Bruce that, on the issue of ministry staff, I was talking about the bureaucracy. The problem is that this minister has had a gag rule against any member of the House talking to the bureaucracy. You have to go through the minister's political staff. My experience for all these years has been that political staff do what political staff do best, and that's to protect the minister. Really, the truth doesn't need that much protection, and that was my point. There have been concerns by the bureaucracy about proceeding in this area, and that's a matter of public record. The member for Toronto—Danforth and I can attest to dozens of meetings where we've had all that push-back. I don't doubt for the moment that the minister's political staff were delightful. I certainly don't have a communications problem with them. It's the fact that you can't talk to the bureaucracy in this government, and I think that's shameful, frankly.

On the issue of counselling, again, the member for Huron—Bruce missed my point. My point was, who is going to pay for it? There are low-income families and others who need access to that counselling. Today it's available; it's provided at no cost. This eliminates that, and so now people are going to have to come up with this money. I don't want this to be seen as a cost-cutting measure. We are dealing with human relations.

Finally—I don't have time to read the full record in—I received one letter from someone who is quite concerned that there is a gap in this legislation. They talk about, "The face of adoption has changed, the terminology has changed, but one major thing hasn't. Natural mothers and fathers still do not have a voice, and the sales pitch and

guarantee to adopters is intertwined in this no-contact clause. Given the fact that the children's aid society has no one overseeing their human rights abuses, that CAS handles most of the record-keeping...." The letter goes on. The point is, open adoption is not addressed in this. People have to wait until their child turns 18 before they will get that information, and they are desperately seeking some support in this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Churley:** I didn't know I was going to get an opportunity today to give my leadoff speech in this area and I went back to my office to dig out some files to try to figure out what I was going to focus on today. Of course, over the years, I had no idea how many files I had. There were so many, I just grabbed a few and picked things out. As you know, this has been a long battle that I have been engaged in for a number of years. Bill 14, Bill 16, Bill 77, Bill 108, Bill 88—I think it was. There was a private member's bill by Tony Martin when we were in government, and it just failed to pass. It was held up before the House prorogued and that ended that one.

Then there were all the other bills, including Bill 77, which I brought forward under the Conservative government. It actually went out to committee. As we all know here, we need to change the private members' system because there is definitely a flaw that I'll get into in a bit. But it went out to committee and we had public hearings on the bill. Many of the people who are sitting with us today, leaders in the adoption community, came, as well as just rank-and-file people who were impacted one way or the other by this issue: grandparents, birth parents, adoptive parents, adult adoptees—some of them with their children—and we heard their stories. I know there had been hearings in Ontario before, hearing people's stories.

**1650**

Even though the majority of people in this Legislature, from all parties, supported the bill, we were never able—because of the kind of system we have here in terms of getting substantive private member's bills passed, we were never able to get it through. My caucus colleagues will tell you what I went through and what I put them through at the end of every session when my adoption bill would be caught up in the whole long list of things that were being negotiated at the end of the session.

Now, to be honest, I don't think my caucus colleagues believed that the Conservative government was going to let it pass at the end of the day anyway, because even though there were few, they were very ferociously opposed to the bill, and everybody has noticed that it's a very emotional issue. So every session, that would be hanging out there, and I would be so desperate along with the community this time, because so many people supported the concept and the idea, that we would be able to get it passed, but it just never happened. I'm very pleased that the Minister of Community and Social Services has come forward with a government bill, because it's highly unlikely with a majority government, and particularly given that our whole caucus supports the



bill and wants it to move forward and I believe that the majority—I don't know how many of the Conservative Party are outright opposed to it. I know some of them have expressed concerns.

I agree with the member from—where are you from again?

**Mr. Levac:** Brant.

**Ms. Churley:** Brant, exactly, who has always been extremely supportive, as have many of the members who are sitting in this House today. There are some new members and I don't know where they stand, but I know that with most of them I've had an opportunity to talk to, some needed to think about it and some were very clear. For some people, there may be that little secret in your family that you don't know about, but if you don't have some member of your family who is directly impacted by this, it's also an issue that, given how busy we all are, until you really delve into the complexities of it, you don't get it. I found in one of my files—the five times I brought forward the bill, I would go through the same process over again—we all do that when we have private members' bills, writing to each and every member, "Hope you'll support my bill, here's what it does, with background material"—and I certainly found a lot of that. I also found in the files just tremendous letters of support from many members in this Legislature who I know tried hard in their own caucuses through those years to help us get it through.

What is important today is that this is a government bill and, with majority support, it will pass, and it's just fantastic. I remember meeting with the minister shortly after the Liberals won the government. I was met in a very friendly and receptive way by the minister and her staff, and I and my staff, and we all met and discussed it, and we figured out what work needed to be done and who was doing what and that I would provide information and that they would get information and start meeting with members of the community and the work started to happen. That was incredibly important, to know that the work was happening, that previously, quite frankly, because it was a private member's bill, except in our government where we did do the work, and ironically, I must say, I was the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations in our government, but I was also the Registrar General, and this was before I found my son. This put me in this very strange position where I really had to question my integrity.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Churley:** Fortunately, they are up in Thunder Bay, but can you imagine? All of my adult life, after I had a son as a teenager and gave him up for adoption—and I'm not going to spend a lot of time talking about my personal story but I'll tell you a little bit about it—I always wanted to find my son, but I had decided that I would wait until intuitively I felt the time was right. I had registered with the government and Parent Finders and all of that and hoped that he would find me.

Then I became Registrar General and it occurred to me that I was in charge of all of those files, including the

personal and confidential files of my son's birth. Can you imagine being in that position? I won't lie to you. I had some fantasies of going up to Thunder Bay and saying that I needed to look at certain records and sneaking into these files. Of course, who wouldn't? Wouldn't you? But I never did. Obviously, I was in a trusted position. I was a minister, and that's all about integrity, and I certainly could not and would not do that. But I have to tell you, it drove me crazy knowing that it was there and I could, maybe through devious ways—they might want to know why I was trying to get into those records. Nonetheless, of course, I didn't do it, but it did spur me to think that the time had come to actually conduct my search. I did it, and I'll just tell you a little bit about my story and get that out of the way before I go into some details about the bill.

It's public knowledge. I have written about it in the *Toronto Star*. I had a child as a teenager and gave him up for adoption. My family didn't know about it, which is often the case, or sometimes it's families who will work with or force their daughters to give up their children.

I gave up my child. As any birth mother will tell you, when they say goodbye to that little person they've carried in their body for nine months and they have to go through the pain of childbirth pretty much alone, as I did, and say goodbye, they promise—I remember staring at that little boy, that little baby, in the bassinet behind the glass. I only got to touch him; I never got to hold him. Right after he was born, I was able to reach out and touch his head. But I looked through that glass and they brought him over. I said, "I will find you some day," and I did. I think that is the reality for most birth mothers.

When we hear that birth mothers were never—that's one of the things we hear a lot, that birth mothers were promised confidentiality. I want to be fair. There may be some in certain circumstances, and certainly the privacy commissioner has said she's heard from some of those, whose life circumstances are such that they're worried. That's why there's a contact veto, and I'll talk a bit more about that in a moment. But the vast majority of birth mothers—and, in some cases, birth fathers, but particularly the mothers—it is our goal, it is our passion that one day we are going to reunite with our children. Having said that, let me also say to adoptive parents, and certainly my son's adoptive parents, who are the nicest people in the world—my son really lucked out.

We located him through the help of Holly Kramer from Parent Finders. I located him over—and I'm not going to go into that long story, but eventually we found him. I remember the first time I talked to his adoptive parents, who are his parents. I was a bit worried, because I was going public, about how they would react. My son's adoptive father said to me—it was a very emotional conversation—the sweetest thing that you could imagine. He said, "Marilyn, we always considered you to be part of our family because if it weren't for you, we wouldn't have our son." He said that to me, and I think that that's how most adoptive parents feel. But there's no doubt about it that there are some adoptive parents who are very concerned, and that's documented, that somehow

the birth mother is going to reach into their lives and take away their children. Of course, that's not possible.

I raised my beautiful daughter, Astra, whom I had under much better circumstances when I was a little older, some years later. She grew up as an only child, but there was always this shadow, which she eventually found out about, but that's another story for another time. There was always this shadow in our lives. The minister read a letter from somebody who said they missed somebody they had never met. There was a shadow, always, in our lives.

1700

The reality is that I didn't bond; I didn't raise my son. His adoptive parents took him home as a newborn and bonded with him and raised him and did all the things we parents do with our children: when they become teenagers, the first time they come home drunk; the first time they get all As in school; being up in the middle of the night, dealing with fevers and sickness—all of those things that create a bond between parents and child. I never did that; they did. To any adoptive parent who has concerns about that, even if there are problems in the relationship, which sometimes is the case, no birth mother can come into the family and take away the bond—you would know that—that exists between the parents who raised the child and the child.

Having said that, I will say to you that there is also a bond between the birth parent, the birth mother in particular, and the child, for obvious reasons. So the relationship I have now with my son: We found his biological father in BC, who came—he recently got married—there's a whole bunch of other relatives out there, and we've all come together and met.

It was a tremendous event, where what we found out, as one big, almost unmanageable family—and it's not like we're best buddies and spend all our time together—that we like each other, we respect each other, and we all love this one particular person. That's the bond we all share. What we have discovered is that there's enough love to go around, and that's what it's really all about: that it's not a threat to anybody; that we all have different roles in our children's lives.

I also want to point out that not everybody who reunites has such a happy story. That's something we heard quite frequently from people who came to give deputations to the committee. But what everybody said, and I have not heard anybody say otherwise, even if it doesn't work out—either there was a rejection in that the person didn't want to be contacted or they found out not very flattering things about their birth parent or adopted child or whatever—was, "Now I know." That is something most of us take for granted.

We grow up with our parents saying to us, "Oh, you sound just like your Aunt Edna," or "You've got your grandfather's nose," or "You know that funny little tic you've got in your eye? You'd better have that checked out, because for Uncle Sam, that tic turned into something serious."

I'm delving into a very serious issue around not knowing, because it's a psychological need to know and

a right to know who you are. But now, because we have so much information about genetically passed-on diseases, that has actually become a matter of life and death; it actually has become that. It always was, but it was before we knew about so many of these diseases. If you know in advance that it's in the family, sometimes you can take precautions and prevent it from happening to you. But at the very least you can be prepared for it. You can make decisions as to whether or not you're going to have children yourself. You can change your diet. You can do all of the things, like the special screening that the previous government brought in for women with breast and ovarian cancers in the family, that we take for granted. You talk to adult adoptees who say they go to their doctor and they've got a problem, and the doctor says, "Is there such and such a disease in your family?" And it's a blank slate; they don't know. The way the current system works, if you are diagnosed with a serious disease, you can apply to get your health information, and if it's available, you can get it. The problem, of course, for most of these diseases is that, by the time you are diagnosed with it, it is too darned late.

That is one of the key reasons why I will not and cannot support a disclosure veto. I too have talked at length to the privacy commissioner. When we had committee hearings for one of my bills, Bill 77, she made it clear in her letter to me—and I'm sorry; I don't have a copy or I'd read it directly, so I'm more paraphrasing here—that adoption disclosure falls outside the purview of the privacy commissioner. She said, "It falls outside my area, but I will give you my comments on it, while admitting that it falls outside, and let me tell you why. If you think about it, adoption, for obvious reasons, was left out of the freedom of information and privacy act because, if it wasn't, we couldn't deny adoptees their own personal information. It's that simple. If it weren't excluded, then it might be a problem for the birth parents to get the information. But adoptees, under the law, would be allowed to have their personal and private information." The paradox of that is just unreal, but that is the situation.

She wrote a letter to the committee explaining her concerns, and we did have a very good meeting to discuss in detail what I consider to be some serious flaws in the argument: that it's also the responsibility of the freedom of information and privacy commissioner to make sure that individuals have access to their own private information; that it's not just about protecting people, but it's also about being in the position to provide that information.

The most important point that I brought up with the privacy commissioner and I want to bring it up here: For those who are having serious concerns about the disclosure veto based on what the privacy commissioner said—because, of course, we all listen very carefully to our very own experts who are put in that position to give us their best possible opinion on any laws that we're making. The minister referred to this earlier, and it is so important that people understand this piece, so I'm going to repeat it. Minister Papatello and I have discussed this.



Organizations like Parent Finders have been out there for a long time, and all kinds of other agencies and organizations that have been helping people search. But in this age of technology, with the explosion of the Internet, people are finding each other anyway. It's unfortunate that it is two classes of people. For instance, Holly Kramer from Parent Finders was very kind; she didn't charge me very much to do the search for me. It was more, I think, out of pocket. A lot of people can't afford to pay that money when they have this so-called non-identifying information. But what I mean by the two classes is that even on the Internet, for instance, there was a certain period in our history where, believe this or not, children were just given numbers, so they don't even have a name to go by when they get some information. Having said that, there are a lot more people finding each other, through the Internet and through all kinds of other means.

Right now, under our existing laws, with no contact veto, let alone a disclosure veto—no nothing—if you find somebody, there's nothing to stop you from knocking on that door the next day.

1710

The good news, after all these years, is that for those of us who were lucky enough to find each other through other means, we don't do that. Just put yourself in the position of being either the adult adoptee desperately searching for their birth mother, father, siblings or whoever they're searching for—or the birth mother, as in my case, dreaming all these years of finally meeting my son as an adult. Was I going to do anything to blow that opportunity? No.

That is the experience that you hear over and over again: You start off, you write the letter, you find each other and you give each other a lot of time. We wrote letters to each other for a while, sent some pictures and talked about when it would be good to get together. After several months of this, although I was champing at the bit, as you can imagine, I had such extreme respect for his need to give this a little time.

He knew he was adopted. He hadn't registered. He had told me he'd seen my name on elevator licences, though, because he happened in his case to know my last name, and he did see it. But he just thought, "No, it can't be. Nobody would have a mother whose name is on licences in elevators." Can you imagine that? But he needed some time. I feared that if I pushed the envelope there, if I couldn't wait and just showed up, not giving him enough time to be ready for the meeting would destroy his trust in me. That's true of everybody. When you finally do get the information and want to unite, you want it to work and you want it to go smoothly.

So even though the situation right now is that you can do that, people don't. But as more and more people are finding each other—for those who are concerned that the new legislation, because it's opening up records and allowing disclosure, is actually going to cause people to just start showing up more than they are now, it doesn't happen now when it can.

The fact is that, whether you like it or not, from looking at other legislation that's way ahead of us and at evidence in other jurisdictions, I'm one of those who now believes that we don't even need contact vetoes. There are some groups who feel, "Who is the government to say who people can or cannot meet?" Nevertheless, the contact veto is there for that very purpose: to give comfort to those who are concerned about that very aspect, and that is the person showing up at the door and ruining a family or a secret that's in the family that could cause all kinds of problems. Those things we shouldn't take lightly.

But the irony of the situation, and what I tried to point out to the privacy commissioner, is that if that is her concern—she said very clearly that her concern is that the poor birth mother, who thought she was promised confidentiality until one day the adult child shows up at her door, needs to be protected—then all the more reason to support this bill with the contact veto, which will mean that there's some legislation in place that would have to be adhered to.

I found the article—there have been so many lately—by Evelyn Gigantes very interesting. It was published in the *Toronto Star* on April 11 in response to the privacy commissioner's concerns and editorials in the *Globe* and the *Star* supporting the privacy commissioner's concerns. I found this interesting, because there was an editorial in the *Star* on my bill, which did not have disclosure veto, supporting it and saying very clearly that people had the right to their own information.

Ms. Gigantes's article was very good. It talked about that issue and some of the problems with it. For those of you who don't know, she's a former Ontario Minister of Health, a former Minister of Housing, a colleague of mine when we were in government, and just a wonderful human being. I'm going to read you a little bit of what she has to say:

"Same Objections on Disclosing Birth Parents Were Made in the Ontario Legislature in 1978

"It is disheartening to witness the current debate about reforming adoption information disclosure in Ontario."

As an aside here, in 1979, I'm proud to say, it was Mr. Ross McClellan, New Democratic member, who put forward a private member's bill that resulted in North America's first official disclosure registry, right here in Ontario. I'm really proud of the fact that New Democrats have been strong and effective advocates in this area since way back in 1979, when we were leaders in North America.

Ms. Gigantes goes on to say, "Editorials in major newspapers and even the Ontario privacy commissioner have criticized the opening up of information proposed by social services minister Sandra Pupatello.

"As early as 1978," and Ms. Gigantes was here at the time, "the same hypocritical objections were raised in the Ontario Legislature.

"Then, as now, the argument was made that legal secrecy around adoptions is mainly to protect the privacy rights of women who gave their children for adoption.

"That argument was wrong in 1978 and I hope it will be rejected now, nearly 30 years later."

Then she goes into describing some components of the bill and some of the quotes from former members who did not support disclosure over the years. But I want to skip to what she has to say about the privacy commissioner's remarks on this:

"The privacy commissioner's public statement is curious. She cites a report of the New South Wales Law Reform Commission (LRC) in 1992 about changes two years earlier providing legal access to birth records in that state.

"While she acknowledges that the LRC found the principal objectors to the new openness of adoption information were adopting families, she fails to mention that the commission's report on the New South Wales Adoption Information Act of 1990 was overwhelmingly positive, in terms of the act's principles, administration, effects and public acceptance.

"This extensive and important New South Wales LRC report documented that, during the 14 months of open birth records, 15,985 individuals had sought information and 30% of them were birth mothers.

"Given that many birth mothers could not apply, having died before the law was changed, this is strong evidence that birth mothers are being 'protected' against their will."

She goes on to talk about the other positive aspects of that report. I read the report because it was of great interest. It was one of the few in-depth reports that were done to look at the impact of open adoption records, and it was an overwhelmingly positive report.

Of course, in any law, no matter what it is, there are always going to be some issues and some problems. You cannot bring forward a law that doesn't have some negative impacts sometimes on some people, but to pick on the one small part of the problems—very minute problems, actually—in an overwhelmingly positive report and how well it was working out for all parties, I think misses the point. It's important for people to understand that, with all due respect to the privacy commissioner, because we always respect the opinion of our experts, as I said earlier—as she said to me in a letter when we were at committee with one of my bills, and I know the minister quoted it in the Legislature the other day—again, I'm paraphrasing—at the end of the day, this is a very complicated and emotional issue and needs to be decided by legislators, and that is exactly what we're doing. That is what we're doing here.

1720

We're not reinventing the wheel here. It's interesting to note that when it comes to disclosure vetoes, BC is way ahead of Ontario. They've had the laws changed for a number of years—and England since the 1970s. That is how far we are behind here. But some of those jurisdictions are now looking at getting rid of the disclosure vetoes because, when you think of it, what it does is it sets up two classes of people.

Why, in heaven's name, after all these years of trying to get these laws updated—we're so far behind now; Ontario used to be a leader, in 1978, in North America—would we bring in a bill that would not completely fix the problem and would create two classes of people? Albeit the class that couldn't get their information would be a very small percentage, there would still be a class of people out there who couldn't get vital health information, who couldn't get their own birth records and information while everybody else could. Why in the world would we do that? Particularly when the evidence is there, and I pointed it out earlier, that the contact veto works. That is the thing that we have to bear in mind.

Let's get ahead of the game here in Ontario now. For us to bend to that concern would, in fact, put us behind again, because other jurisdictions—there is a lot of pressure now that they've brought in bills with the disclosure veto and the problems that are arising out of that—are going to have to look at reforming their bills again. So we have an opportunity to do it right.

I wanted to read some quotes to you from people who came forward when my bill, Bill 77, one of the five bills, went to committee, just so you get a sense of the support from various members of the community out there. They're still the same people; they are still around; they're still saying the same things. I know that they're working hard to work with the minister and all of us who want to see this bill passed and amendments made to deal with some of the problems. These are some of the things that they said then and are still saying today.

Michael Grand, Ph.D., policy chair, Adoption Council of Ontario, says, "In England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Israel, Argentina, Mexico, several of the United States, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Finland," Austria, Germany, France, "New Zealand, Australia, British Columbia, Newfoundland, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, adoptees can approach the respective birth registries and obtain identifying birth information." Of course, there have been more added since then.

Kariann Ford, an adoptee, said this: "The adoption agencies are neglecting to pass on" medical "information given by birth mothers who are trying to help their adopted children. Life-saving information is being withheld ... by the very organizations that have been put in place to help and assist." Kariann Ford was very courageous, and she came forward publicly to the committee and talked about her horrendous situation. She's a perfect example, and there are many more, of somebody who inherited a life-threatening and very serious disease, didn't know about it, had three children and passed it on to them. By the time she found out—she's very, very ill—she realized that had she known, she would have taken perhaps different steps in her life, as well as she could have done things to mitigate it, even though there was nothing she could have done in this case, as I understand it, to stop the onset of the disease. So she came forward as a living, breathing example of the issues out there around not knowing your health issue. In some cases the health information is there, but not passed on to



the adoptive parents and the adult adoptees, who don't get it unless—well, I don't have time to go into the present system, but I described it earlier—unless they get sick. By then, it's frequently too late because you can't take the precautions that you might have, had you had the information.

Wendy Rowney of the Coalition for Open Adoption Records—and I should say that Wendy and Michael are both patiently still sitting here, along with Karen Lynn, Holly Kramer and a whole bunch of others; I know it is dangerous picking out names, and I could go on. Have been strong advocates and worked very, very hard to help me get my bill right, and they're now working very hard with the minister so that she can get her bill right. We want to thank them for all of the work they have done over the years. They have been fearless and courageous, and sometimes really annoying because they never stop. That's why we're here today. Of course, they're smiling; they know that I mean "annoying" in the nicest sense. They're very good friends of mine, and it's because of them and other advocates who go way back—some certainly before we got involved—that we are here today, and we really owe them our gratitude. We can take lots of credit and it can go all around because there are a lot of strong advocates here, but they are the heroes in this situation and they do deserve a round of applause.

Here is what Wendy had to say: "There have been no serious breaches of veto anywhere in Canada. No one has ever accused another individual of violating a contact veto.... Vetoes work. They provide privacy for the small minority who seek it."

Here's what the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies said: "The OACAS supports the underlying philosophy behind Bill 77. We're of the view that the time is right to bring about greater openness in the adoption disclosure process. ...it would indeed be unfortunate for this bill to fail to be enacted after all the adoption disclosure bills that have come before the Legislature in recent years."

Andrea Németh, an adoptee, said, "Every other adult citizen of this province has the right to his or her original, unaltered birth information. For no other reason than that I was adopted as an infant—an arrangement into which I did not enter and from which, even as an adult, I cannot leave—I am denied that right." That is what Andrea Németh had to say. When you think about it, it's true: Adoptees are the only people in our province who don't have access to their own personal birth information.

Here's what Karen Lynn, from the Canadian Council of Birthmothers, had to say, and she was here earlier as well: "All of our experience in the adoption community has shown us that the overwhelming majority of birth families welcome contact from their relatives who had been adopted. This includes first mothers. This runs contrary to the assumption that some first mothers want privacy. Will this issue be decided by assumption or fact?"

Terry Gardiner, an adoptee, says, "My adoption was a contract in which my interests were decided by others

because I was a child. I am no longer a child and should have the freedom of choice which every other adult Canadian enjoys, especially in matters which go to the very core of who I am as an individual and as a human being."

Nikki Weiss, adoptive parent, says, "As an adoptive parent, I am in full support of Bill 77. In fact, the bill is long overdue. I believe that our open relationship with" our son's "original family positively and profoundly contributes to his positive and confident outlook on the world and helps our family function normally."

There is another quote from Dr. Grand, who says, "The first thing we must remember is that we are not talking about children. We are talking about adult adoptees and birth parents who are well into middle age and beyond.

"My published study of searching clearly indicated that when adoptive parents and adoptees searched together a stronger bond was formed between them."

1730

Then we have a quote from Diane Mathes, a reunited adoptee and also a therapist. I still remember her presentation because of her dual roles in this situation.

She says, "My reasons for searching for my birth family had nothing to do with being unhappy in my adoptive family. They were initially, crucially, for medical information, because at age 34 I had undergone two surgeries, neither of which corrected the problem but left me progressively worse. At age 39, with medical information from my birth father's family I was finally correctly diagnosed with thyroid disease and immune problems and returned to full health within six months. One of the difficult issues for me to resolve was that the surgeries and the length of time had left me unable to conceive. I believe that if I had had my birth father's family information and been able to address the problem correctly at age 34, my chances for conception would have been at least vastly improved."

Mary Shields, Birth Mothers for Each Other, said, "In the past, the Ontario government has taken the position that birth mothers need their protection. We have never been asked if we want it or don't. Let us speak for ourselves. Open up the adoption records."

Then we had a press release from Dr. Philip Wyatt, who came down to Queen's Park at my invitation for a little event we held for members so that they could understand the issue a little better, back in 2002. Dr. Philip Wyatt, who is the chief of genetics—at the time, anyway—at the North York General Hospital, said then, and I think it's even more true today, "Current adoption disclosure laws put the health of more than 300,000 Ontarians at risk. With our ever-increasing understanding of genetics, now more than ever it is important for every individual to know his or her genetic history. Without this knowledge, adoptees are at risk."

He also says, "Adult adoptees cannot access their own medical history until after they show symptoms of a fatal disease. Current laws make it impossible for adoptees to take informed preventive action. Without accurate patient

information, doctors can misdiagnose illnesses and prolong suffering. Adoptees can die because of this injustice, or unknowingly pass on conditions to their own children." I gave you one example of that, and there are many more.

In the 15 minutes or so that I have left, I want to talk directly about the bill, which I am supporting and, as I said, am very, very pleased is before us. We're finally having this opportunity to debate it, knowing it has full potential to pass into legislation. I have said that I've been talking to some members in the adoption community who know this legislation in the world, in other jurisdictions, inside out. They are the experts and they're certainly the ones who—I see Karen Lynn is back now. I quoted you, Karen, when you were away. Karen Lynn is another strong advocate and a very courageous and strong woman, too. We've gotten to know each other very well over the years. We've shared wine and shed tears together, haven't we? All of us. Michael and Wendy and Karen.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** I'll drink to them.

**Ms. Churley:** Yes, we'll drink to them. They're good people.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the concerns around the bill, which I talked to the minister about, and we're going to work in a co-operative way to try to resolve some of these issues. One of them is, of course—I think perhaps the most serious one; I think there are remedies to this that we have to think about—that as the bill stands now, as it's tabled, it repeals the right of adult adoptees and birth relatives to access their information that has always been referred to as—certainly what I got helped me find my son, because without it I couldn't have done it. It's called non-identifying information that is held by the children's aid society. That was a right that the adoption community—and I know that Parent Finders was really involved in that fight back in 1987.

For people who don't understand the distinction, what has been locked away from people is their own birth information: their birth certificate and registration, with their real name, their birth parents' real name and that kind of thing.

The other thing, and I went through it myself, is where you work with a social worker. You give as much as a teenager knows about your parents' health information—especially when it's a secret from them. You don't know very much anyway, but you give what information you can, and it's in a file at CAS. That file contains that so-called non-identifying information.

I wrote to the children's aid society and requested the so-called non-identifying information, and I received that information. It really helped me in my search. This is the point that I want to make: Without that so-called non-identifying information, there are no names, no addresses or any of those things attached.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The chatter level is rising a bit. I wish you'd give co-operation to the speaker.

**Ms. Churley:** That information is really critical for those who are searching. Just think about it. When you get the original birth information—the name of the birth mother—if she had the child at 16, think of the changes that will have happened in her life since that time. She could be living somewhere else across the world; the name could have changed. All kinds of things will and do happen.

So that other piece of information—we don't want to see a situation where we gain one right and lose another. I know that's not the minister's intention here, and I know that we can work to find a way to make sure that that doesn't happen, but I just want to point out that was not part of my bills. I made it very clear within my bills that that right would also be maintained: the ability to get that information through children's aid. All of the private members' bills that have been introduced—I forgot to mention this earlier, and I should give credit as well. I mentioned Tony Martin, but Alex Cullen, who sat in this House some years ago—

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** Oh, God. He was downloaded to the city, wasn't he?

**Ms. Churley:** —be nice, now—also brought forward a private member's bill and was a strong advocate as well.

**Mr. Baird:** I supported your private member's bill.

**Ms. Churley:** Yes, you did. John Baird is back; you can tell. Yes, John Baird always supported the private member's bill but did not have whatever it took to get his caucus to get it passed. So there you go. But he did support it.

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** It's a girl thing.

**Ms. Churley:** It might be a girl thing, yes.

This is a very important problem with the bill, as discussed with the minister. We absolutely cannot be in a position where, in order to accept what we've been fighting for for many years—access to original and personal information that's locked away—we lose the opportunity and ability to get this other information, those files that give that kind of background information that helps you in your search. Without that information, it could really frustrate the efforts of a search. I know that it's not the intent of the minister to do that, and we will have to find a way to fix that in the bill.

I mentioned before, when I spoke to this bill the first day and I hadn't had a chance to look very carefully at it—of course, I now have, and I'm very pleased to see that the bill, except for this one major problem and a couple of other smaller ones, does echo the most important components of all of the private members' bills that have been brought before the House and the advice from the adoption community, and that is that it gives adult adoptees unqualified access to their own birth certificates and adoption orders, regardless of when the adoption took place. Birth parents have similar access. That has always been at the core of all of the private members' bills that I've brought forward, and others, and this bill reflects that.



1740

The bill, of course, is retroactive. Those who say it shouldn't be retroactive completely miss the point, because that's what the bill is all about. Most, if not all, adoptions today are open. I get heartbreaking letters from women in their 80s who gave up a child when they were young, and they're ill and they desperately want to find their children before they die, to know that the child they gave up for adoption is OK. It may be, if possible, an opportunity to even meet. So it's absolutely critical that it's retroactive because we're fixing a wrong that we thought at the time—

**Mr. Baird:** It's not the same bill.

**Ms. Churley:** No, it's a different kind of bill; exactly. This bill is about retroactivity. That's what it's designed to do. It was brought in at a time when there was shame around having children out of wedlock; there was shame, believe it or not, for infertile women.

I don't know if anybody here has ever seen the movie *Secrets and Lies*. I recommend it to everybody. It's a British movie, and it's a very funny, compelling, and also—

**Hon. Ms. Pupatello:** This is a good movie.

**Ms. Churley:** Have you seen that movie? You laugh, you cry—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Churley:** I'm trying to remember; if you think of it, let me know. Go out and rent it: *Secrets and Lies*. It's all about the two who converge in this movie: a woman who'd given up—there are hilarious parts to this movie—a child for adoption, and her husband's sister, who can't conceive, and all of the intertwined shame and problems around, on the one hand, the secret about the adoption and, on the other hand, the shame around the infertility. These laws were brought in when that was the norm. They were brought in when there was a lot of shame around these things, but that stopped a long time ago, on the whole. This bill is to fix that wrong that we all know now—it has been outlined many times—has caused intolerable, unnecessary suffering, and continues to do so.

The disclosure veto is not in the bill. Again, I've gone into some detail today about why it is important that we stick to our guns on that one. We cannot bring in a bill that sets up two classes of people once again. The contact veto I've already talked about, and so has the minister. The provision of updated medical information to adoptees: In my bill I had it mandatory for birth parents who filed contact vetoes to provide adoptees updated genetic and medical information. There's a more permissive approach in this bill. It encourages birth parents to provide the information. I would prefer, given everything we know now about genetic diseases and how little—I gave a personal example. I actually knew about my own family's health, partly because of my age but partly because illnesses appeared in my family since the time when I was a teenager. So I believe that, if that contact veto is filed, it is important that people be asked to

update the files when it comes to health provisions or health information.

There are a couple of other things that are somewhat different. I talked about the disclosure registry—and we really have to deal with that—and the provision of counselling. Right now it's mandatory, which is ridiculous. After I went through the process of locating my son, I didn't need ministry counselling, to line up and wait until an opening was possible, before I could move on.

**Mr. Baird:** You're a grown woman.

**Ms. Churley:** Yes, exactly; I'm a grown woman and can make my own decisions. But the bill did allow for counselling upon request, and I believe that is important and we need to look at a way to make sure that, for those who need counselling, it's provided in a timely way.

A disclosure veto for adoptees in cases where harm is possible: I know that many of us receive—I have, myself—constituents who come to see us, particularly those who adopted children who were taken away from their parents because they had been done harm by their birth parents. Some of these are concerned when they know that horrible, atrocious things have been done to these children whom they adopt. They certainly have legitimate concerns. They feel, the ones I talked to, that their children, when they grow up, should have the right to get the information. But they express real concerns that, when the knowledge is there that that harm has been done, those birth parents should be able to get that information. This bill provides for that.

The timeline for implementation: It says it will be in place in 18 months after the bill is proclaimed. I hope that we can stick to that. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, it's a huge undertaking to change a system that has been in place and not working very well for many, many years—to get it right.

I will end by once again thanking everybody for all of the support that you have given me over the years from all parties. I notice that my colleague Shelley Martel is here. All of my colleagues have been supportive throughout the years, in my five attempts to get my bill passed, and have been through my ups and downs when, every time, I had my hopes dashed. This is a very important moment for me, as I said at the beginning. I was hoping that the day would come when a government—in fact, any government—would bring forward a bill. Some people say to me that it's—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Churley:** Well, we're not going to be partisan on this one, actually. I know it sounds surprising, but I've worked on this issue too long, too hard. I hope that this is one of those situations where we can all work together with the minister, whose intentions, I know, are good. She really wants to work with us all to get the bill right.

I'm looking forward to the committee hearings so that we can look at some of the problems I've outlined with the bill and we can get it back into the House and have a vote. I would like very much for that to happen very soon.

So there you go. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** I'm happy to speak to Bill 183, adoption disclosure, and I congratulate the Minister of Community and Social Services, Sandra Pupatello, for her fine work.

It was great to hear our colleague from Brant with his heartfelt disclosure around this piece of legislation, and also to listen to the member from Toronto–Danforth and her journey through some of the work that she has done here in this House, but also her own personal life and how it has been affected by adoption.

Adoption disclosure dates back in this province to 1927, and really, the system hasn't been changed; it's still back in the days of the horse and carriage. This piece of legislation will bring it forward to the information age of the 21st century.

The changes proposed to the Child and Family Services Act and the Vital Statistics Act will bring many answers to those adoptees over the age of 18. They'll now be able to obtain their original birth records. It will allow them to see their original birth names, and, in so doing, help them identify their birth parents. In turn, this will also open up information to those birth parents so they can access birth records and adoption orders once the adoptee has reached 19.

What this will allow is to have both parties be able to find many unanswered questions that they've been searching for. I can imagine how many questions many of those adopted children and their birth parents may have about where their children may be, what they look like—also the adoptees, about their personalities. We often talk about nurture and nature. This piece of legislation will allow many of those answers to be told.

1750

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Toronto–Danforth because really, in fact, out of respect for the work she's done, I think the government is certainly imitating many of the points in her own private member's bills that have been brought forward here on two or three different occasions. And I do want to respect my riding of Durham. I have had input from one person who has certainly encouraged me to use her name, because she is a very strong advocate for full disclosure, Julie Jordan.

In every context I've had on this issue, I think the government, if they're listening, can resolve the contentious points—one is the issue of retroactivity, and this isn't the first instance in which this government has brought forward the issue of retroactivity—and find some transitional way of dealing with that retroactivity issue in terms of the no-contact provision. It has been brought to my attention that the people have always said they would respect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to guarantee the right to have knowledge of their identity, and I certainly respect that. I think it's important that children have that right—that's been established, I believe—and would want to be on the record as having that right.

I think what's most important here, as the member from Toronto–Danforth has described, is that the child

certainly has the right to know issues that could be of concern as they grow older. So what you are looking at here is that the issue of retroactivity and the conflicts that our privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, has raised, could be dealt with by saying that the no-contact provision would also have the provision—as it is now, it is almost like a negative option. Unless they put the no-contact provision in so that there is no contact, the individual who has since given up the child for adoption, their own life and their own siblings etc., could be affected by that. But there would be no reason why they couldn't disclose the particular birth information—genetic etc. We're in an era of technology, so I think this can be addressed if the ministry is prepared to listen.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** It's a pleasure for me to say a few words with respect to the speech that was given by my colleague from Toronto–Danforth.

First, with respect to the legislation itself and to the minister, a number of points have been raised by my colleague that I think would go a long way to making sure we have an exceptional piece of legislation. It seems to me that after all the years, all the struggle, all the intervention, all the hard work, where we want to be at the end of the day with this legislation, Bill 183, is in a position where we have both the strongest and the finest piece of adoption disclosure legislation anywhere. There have been some very valid and important suggestions that have been raised by my colleague. I trust that this bill is going to go to committee and that at committee there will be a spirit of co-operation from folks from all sides so that we can implement the changes that I think would go a long way to ensuring that we do have a fine piece of legislation that we can all be proud of.

Secondly, there are certainly some folks in the gallery who have been referenced today, and I want to say my thanks to Wendy, Karen and Michael, who in the last number of years since this has been an issue have been e-mailing me and many others who have been here through the various iterations of this bill—and there were many—to bring us the real stories: the stories of people; heart-wrenching, heartwarming stories about why such disclosure was needed and why we had to move on this. So thank you for your persistence.

Last but certainly not least, on behalf of my caucus—the rest of them are in committee and spread throughout the building—I do want to thank Marilyn, the member for Toronto–Danforth. Without her persistence, without her dogged determination to see something done on this important issue, something that was very personal to her but very important to so many other parents across this province, I don't think we would be here today. It hasn't been an easy struggle, and there have been some very disappointing times when this bill didn't move forward. But I want to say to Marilyn, thank you very much for your persistence. We are where we are today because of what you have done. So thank you on behalf of the NDP.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? The Minister of the Environment, the member for—I never have to say it. What is your—



**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment):** Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** I'm very pleased today to have the opportunity to stand and support the comments that have been offered in support of Bill 183 by the member from Toronto–Danforth. Some may think that it's rather unusual. She also serves in the role as critic to my portfolio, Minister of the Environment, so there is a range of issues where, I guess it would be safe to say, we're not on the same page. But I think the member from Toronto–Danforth knows that from the very beginning I have been supportive of this initiative in some of its previous lives, when I was a member of the opposition. I have admired her tireless effort and her commitment.

I had the opportunity, when the bill was at committee when we were in opposition, to hear from some of the presenters she has identified, the folks who are in the gallery today, and I have to say that I was very impressed with the information they brought forward. We are talking about providing rights to adults for information that we all have about ourselves. I think that is the important point to remember with this legislation. We are going to move forward, to be consistent with many other jurisdictions around the world that long before us have recognized that it's an individual's right to know some very basic information about themselves: when they were born, how much they weighed and what their name was at the time of their birth. Many of us might take that for granted. If you did not have that, it would be something that is a missing piece, a part of you. When I was able to attend the committee hearings and hear from people for whom this information is very important, it again convinced me that the efforts that were being put forth by the member from Toronto–Danforth, and now, I'm very proud to say, Minister Papatello, are so very worthwhile. I look forward to its passage.

**Mr. Levac:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have an understanding that the member from Nepean–Carleton would like to speak for two minutes on this item. I would seek unanimous consent to provide the member with that opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Baird:** Thank you very much, to my friend from Brant.

I just wanted to congratulate my colleague from Toronto–Danforth for her remarks. I know the support for the bill is not unanimous in the House, but I want to rise to indicate that she gave great remarks. She has put more effort into this issue than probably any member in my 10 years here, and on any issue that has been of concern to their cabinet or critic responsibilities. I want to congratulate her for that.

I also want to congratulate the minister for moving forward with this legislation as a government bill. When you present a private member's bill, I think that one of

the best things that can happen to it is when it is taken on as a government bill, and that's a good sign. I want to acknowledge the work of the minister in this regard. I thought I would be able to complain about the minister and the policy she pursued, but I'm looking for other issues with which I might oppose her otherwise objectionable political philosophy.

To thank the government: This, to me, is an issue of human rights. Some may not agree, but I don't think the government should be holding information about you, something that is so personal and fundamental to who you are as a human being, and that you should be denied access to that information. I want to congratulate the government, and to congratulate the member for Toronto–Danforth for her remarks. While many people have serious and fair objections to the bill, on balance I think it is the right thing to do. We'll support the legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Toronto–Danforth has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Churley:** This is indeed a rare opportunity, where I get to genuinely thank all the members from all parties for their remarks, and where we are generally in agreement on a piece of legislation and are committing to work together for the good of the people to make this the best legislation, if possible, not only in North America but in the world. I hope we can do that.

I want to say to the Minister of the Environment that I think she deserves some special credit, along with Elizabeth Witmer from the Conservative Party, who isn't here. The Minister of the Environment was then in opposition with me and was extremely supportive. I know she worked her caucus very hard to try to get everybody onside. I want to thank John Baird as well. I know that within his government he worked very hard, and I think quite genuinely, with me to try to get agreement from all three parties to get the bill passed, long shot that it was, and of course it never happened. But he genuinely supported me in every effort. I want to thank the new member from Mississauga East—I think I have that right—who wasn't around through all of this. But you can guess by now that there's quite a long and emotional history to this bill. I particularly want to thank my colleague from Nickel Belt as well, because she and I, and my whole caucus, as I've mentioned, have gone through some serious ups and downs over this bill over the past several years.

I think we're all very pleased in my caucus for a number of reasons. Maybe it will shut me up, now that this bill is finally going to get passed. So thank you to all of you, and I look forward to finalizing this and having a vote soon.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 26 April 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Electricity supply</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	6563
<b>Oral Health Month</b>	
Mr. Duguid .....	6563
<b>NASCAR</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6563
<b>Smoking ban</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6564
<b>Niagara region</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	6564
Mr. Kormos .....	6564
Mr. Craitor .....	6565
<b>Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund</b>	
Mr. Lalonde .....	6564
<b>Municipal finances</b>	
Mr. Parsons .....	6565

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6565
Agreed to .....	6566

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Municipal taxation</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	6566, 6567
Mr. McGuinty .....	6566, 6567
<b>Labour dispute</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6568, 6569
Mr. Duncan .....	6568, 6569
<b>Transportation for the disabled</b>	
Mr. Murdoch .....	6570
Mr. Sorbara .....	6570
<b>Domestic violence</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	6570
Ms. Pupatello .....	6571
Ms. Churley .....	6571
Ms. Marsales .....	6571
<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr. Hardeman .....	6572
Mr. McGuinty .....	6572
<b>Social services</b>	
Mr. Prue .....	6572
Ms. Pupatello .....	6572
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. Brownell .....	6573
Mr. Kennedy .....	6573

## Construction industry

Mrs. Witmer .....	6574
Mr. Bentley .....	6574
<b>School closures</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6574
Mr. Kennedy .....	6574

## PETITIONS

<b>Wildlife protection</b>	
Mr. Hardeman .....	6575
<b>Credit Valley Hospital</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6575, 6576
<b>Justice system</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	6576
<b>Anaphylactic shock</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6576, 6577
Mr. Levac .....	6577
<b>Health care workers</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6576
<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6577
<b>Anti-smoking legislation</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6577
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6578
Mr. Dunlop .....	6578

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

<b>Adoption Information Disclosure Act, 2005, Bill 183, Ms. Pupatello</b>	
Ms. Pupatello .....	6578, 6584
Mr. Dunlop .....	6583, 6589
Ms. Churley .....	6583, 6589, 6590
6599	
Mr. Parsons .....	6583
Mr. Jackson .....	6584, 6590
Mrs. Mitchell .....	6589
Mr. Levac .....	6589
Mr. Fonseca .....	6598
Mr. O'Toole .....	6598
Ms. Martel .....	6598
Mrs. Dombrowsky .....	6599
Mr. Baird .....	6599
Debate deemed adjourned .....	6599

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Legislative pages</b>	
The Speaker .....	6565
<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker .....	6565

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 26 avril 2005

## DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Fonds sur l'infrastructure municipale rurale Canada-Ontario</b>	
M. Lalonde .....	6564

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2005 sur la divulgation de renseignements sur les adoptions, projet de loi 183, M<sup>me</sup> Pupatello</b>	
Débat présumé ajourné .....	6599





No. 135B

N° 135B

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 26 April 2005

Mardi 26 avril 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 April 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 avril 2005

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE PEEL

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 186, Loi traitant de la composition du conseil de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When this House last debated this bill, Mr. Prue had the floor. He had concluded his remarks, so we now go into questions and comments with respect to the member for Beaches–East York's presentation.

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** Speaking to the comments last night of both the member from Beaches–East York as well as the comments made by the official opposition, there was a lot of anti-government rhetoric in the official opposition's comments—not so much the member from Beaches–East York; I think he spoke more or less to bill. The one issue that both of them touched on was the concern about the potential for a deadlock of council. So I want to speak a little bit to that.

That's something that can happen in any council. Councils can be deadlocked on different issues. You can have 50% of council supporting one thing and 50% not supporting it. Councils have to then come to a consensus. In this case, no one municipality is going to have a majority, no one municipality is going to be able to rule. I think that that's a good thing. It means that representatives of all three communities are going to have to reach a consensus on matters, such as the appointment of a chair. I think that will lead to a chair who is not parochial for any one particular community. You're not going to end up with a chair who's going to be pro-Mississauga or pro-Brampton or pro-Caledon; you're going to end up with a chair who is suitable to all of them combined, somebody who thinks of the whole region, rather than one particular part of the region.

I think that's important. I think that's something that's going to lead to a continuation of the good governance we've seen in this particular region. Keep in mind, this is one of the best-run municipalities in the country. It has won awards because of its administration. We think that these changes will just help it continue that good, effective style of management to ensure that, in fact, not one area dominates, but all areas will be encouraged and urged to work together.

We believe this will work and it will work well, and the people of Peel will be well-served by it.

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford):** I'm certainly pleased to comment on the statements made by the member from Beaches–East York. It's very clear from the information that I have been receiving—I've got letters here from the mayor of the town of Caledon and also from the mayor of Brampton, which were addressed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—that they want public hearings on this. They want this to slow down and for there to be public hearings in Brampton and Mississauga. I would think that the government, certainly with people of that stature looking for public hearings, would be listening.

It is very important that this not be rammed through the House. I know that there are only three members from the Brampton area, but the fact of the matter is that they have a government that has broken their promises with respect to their intentions for this area. Quite frankly, they're not looking very good by the fact that they're trying to ram this through. The Mississauga members are happy in terms of what is happening here, but there are two other components of that area: Caledon and Brampton.

Public hearings are going to be something that I think the government is going to have to respond to, they're going to have to commit to. Because if they don't believe in the public hearing process, where is the transparency in this government in terms of hearing views on such an important issue? They have to hold standing committee hearings on this particular bill; otherwise it becomes just a sham and it becomes something that—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** We already agreed to that.

**Mr. Tascona:** You've got to have standing committee hearings in the areas that are affected, and Brampton and Mississauga are the areas that are affected. You can't have that big city attitude that the member from Scarborough Centre and the House leader are talking about of having public hearings in Toronto and they can all come

here. Certainly we're looking for those public hearings to be in Mississauga and Brampton so the public can be involved.

1850

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I must say I want to echo what my good friend from Beaches–East York, the municipal affairs critic for the NDP, said at the beginning of this: Why is the government bringing this bill forward? Is there a hue and cry from Brampton and other communities to do this? No. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Communities are saying, "What is going on here?"

It is very clear that what happened was that Judge Adams, when his commission report came out, gave some recommendations about how Peel council should be restructured as far as representation on that new council, and made adjustments to make sure that as the populations in other communities go up, there is an opportunity to adjust the representation on the council so that council is reflected in the new population of Mississauga and other communities.

So I come back to the point that my good friend from Beaches–East York, Mr. Prue, made: Why is the government doing this? What is this all about? We're basically going to say that if Mississauga ends up being overtaken by the population of the other communities, they will be virtually guaranteed that they will never lose the majority out that council. That's not what democracy is all about. Democracy is supposed to be that those with the most people get the largest amount of representation.

I understand what that's like. I come from northern Ontario. We're 10 members in the north to speak on all of the issues that are important to us in northern Ontario. I don't like it, but I understand that there is a majority of population in southern Ontario and that the south has a larger say. I would love it—if you're going to pass a piece of legislation that says northern Ontario is going to get a majority of seats in the Legislature, I'm going to vote with the government. It would be a wonderful thing because, finally, we in northern Ontario would be able to address a number of issues that are important to us.

So I say to the government, hey, if you're going to do this for Mississauga, there's a whole bunch of people in northern Ontario who would love to have this kind of inequity when it comes to representation so that we in northern Ontario can finally get the majority that we deserve in the Legislature and get our agenda through.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour):** I am delighted to stand and address this issue, and specifically address the comments of the member from Beaches–East York.

Let me begin by saying that these regional representation issues are often the most difficult, because they bring to light issues of global significance along with the local issues. No community wants to lose its local autonomy, but regionally, they realize that they must act together in order to properly meet the challenges that face the province of Ontario.

We in this government, in our caucus, have been blessed to have a lot of great advice by people who do not necessarily always share the same approach to many of these local issues. I must say that on this particular issue we have been blessed to have great advice from the members for Brampton Centre, Mississauga East and Mississauga West, to name just a few. I'd like to say that we will continue listening to their advice, as we will listen to the advice of all the people from the region, including many of those here this evening.

I would like to take some time to acknowledge the presence of Mayor Fennell of Brampton and Councillors Gibson, Hames, Manning, Moore, Miles, Hutton, Callahan and Sprovieri, as well as Mayor Morrison of Caledon. Thank you for your attendance and thank you for sharing your good advice with us.

I would like to say that if there are members from Mississauga up there, I welcome them as well. I don't recognize the standing individual over there; he belongs to a different campaign. But anyway, what is essential in issues such as this is we listen to and—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. I'll move on now. The member for Beaches–East York has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I thank those who have commented from Scarborough Centre, from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford, from Timmins–James Bay, and the Minister of Labour. The member from Scarborough Centre talked about the deadlocked council. Yes, that is very real concern to us, because this bill does not contain a provision for the deadlocked council. We have to fall back to the Municipal Act. I spoke about that yesterday.

What has happened with this bill is that you have taken a perfectly functioning group in Peel, who always got along, who in their entire history only had two bylaws that were contentious, where a block vote taken—once against Mississauga and once for Mississauga—in their entire 10-year history. You have turned them into a group of people who are now deeply divided, who are parochial—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Prue:** Please, you have. You have the mayors here from two of the municipalities, who now feel divided because of what you have done. You have gone against every single dictate that the learned judge had talked about. You have ignored the most important recommendation he made. Sadly, you have polarized the issues.

The member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford has talked about public hearings. We agree that there should be public hearings. We think that the public should be broadly consulted—not in this Legislature, not in this building, not in the negotiations that are taking place for one day of hearings in this Legislature. You should be out at least for a couple of weeks in the municipalities to the west of Toronto. You should be out there to listen to the 600 people who jammed the Brampton meetings to say they're opposed. You should listen to Caledon, to the



member from Timmins-James Bay. We're asking for balance and fairness.

To the Minister of Labour, it's well and good to recognize them here. They've been here for two nights. They're sitting in the opposition gallery. They are opposed to you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I'd like to share my time with the member from Mississauga West.

This is a bittersweet day for me in these chambers, proud that my mayor and my colleagues are here from Brampton but saddened that they're here today to indicate their dissatisfaction with Bill 186.

In the fall of last year, our government sought the services of a facilitator skilled at assessing and resolving disputes, and ultimately appointed Ontario Superior Court Justice George Adams—

*Interruption.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Brampton Centre, would you just take a seat?

I would ask the visitors who are in the gallery to please remain seated during the presentation.

I return to the member for Brampton Centre.

**Mrs. Jeffrey:** Justice Adams is a well-respected expert in dispute resolution, and he was asked to forge a consensus on the issues of representation and service delivery. He listened, and he considered the merits of each city's case. For those who would like to look at Justice Adams's report, it's going to be on my Web site tomorrow at [www.lindajeffrey.ca](http://www.lindajeffrey.ca).

Ultimately, Justice Adams recommended a continuation of a structure that denies any one municipality a majority and suggested a formula for regional representation in Peel that took into account current and future growth in all three municipalities. Justice Adams recommended that, in time for the 2006 election, Brampton's regional representation be increased by five and Mississauga's by two. He also recommended that by 2009 representation in Caledon would be at both their area and regional levels.

Bill 186 proposes that Mississauga gain an additional two seats and Brampton one seat at Peel regional council. This will have a significant impact on Brampton, because Brampton has been steadily investing more and, in return, receiving progressively less say in where and how regional programs and services like roads, policing and garbage are delivered.

For the last 32 years, Brampton taxpayers have been contributing millions of dollars to the cost of regional services and facilities in Mississauga. We've been proud to support our neighbours in Peel when they were in the midst of rapid growth.

**1900**

Brampton is currently the fastest-growing city in Canada. We're ranked number one for residential construction and continue to be the fastest-growing city in Peel. Now that Brampton is in the midst of its own rapid growth, it is vital that investments are made in the services and infrastructure in Brampton. Brampton isn't asking the province for special treatment; we're asking

for equitable distribution of representation, as recommended by Justice Adams. Our community isn't looking for a fight; we're asking for fairness.

I want to assure the residents of Brampton Centre that I'm still committed to being part of a Liberal government. When you sent me to Queen's Park in 2003, you gave me a mandate to protect and enhance health care, improve our schools and clean up our environment. We are making significant progress, and I'm so proud that after waiting 30 years, our government is delivering on its promise to bring a new hospital with 608 beds to Brampton. It's the largest construction project in Canada, I'm told.

Yet my constituents also told me that they wanted someone to look out for Brampton and ensure that our voice is heard. As a former city councillor, I understand how our community works and, after reviewing the proposed legislation, I must conclude that it's not in Brampton's best interests. It's my responsibility to my constituents to ensure that their voice is heard at Queen's Park, even when it opposes government legislation.

I'm proud of my government and I continue to support it, yet I'm not afraid to say when a piece of legislation will put my community at serious disadvantage. I've raised my concerns both publicly and privately, and I have not yet received the assurances that I believe are necessary to protect my growing and vibrant community of Brampton. As a result, I will be voting against this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** I think you said you were sharing your time with one of your colleagues. I'll turn now to the member for Mississauga West.

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** The bill before us consists of three pages, a mere six short sections, 29 paragraphs. There's actually less to it than meets the eye.

Justice Adams made nine recommendations, and eight were adopted by the government of Ontario. On one point, the government of Ontario disagreed with Justice Adams. Ontario allocates representation based on actual and not forecast population. On this one point, the government of Ontario disagreed with the Adams report.

This bill will enable the cities of Mississauga and Brampton to adjust their ward boundaries in time for the 2006 elections. Let me use an example. My councillor in ward 9 of Mississauga, Pat Saito, represents about as many people in her ward in Mississauga as does the Premier of Prince Edward Island. So in Mississauga we'll go from the nine councillors we had when we were a city of about 300,000 to 11 councillors representing a city of about 700,000.

The equitable part of Bill 186 is that the resolution of Peel region's issues rests with the men and women its municipalities elect. The people who own homes and businesses in Mississauga take no issue with their friends, their family members, their neighbours or even complete strangers in Brampton and in Caledon, and the reverse is also true. The people in our three communities trust their elected representatives to act in their best inter-

ests. It's certainly true on the three municipal councils. Why, I ask, should any different spirit prevail on Peel regional council?

In a region or in any other type of a confederation, one fundamental principle is that the wealthier areas support other areas to raise the common denominator. This is not the case in Peel, and the realignment will help the three cities address that inequity. Caledon's average family income is close to \$84,000. Mississauga's is about \$60,000. Perhaps the redistribution of seats on Peel regional council will enable the three cities to distribute costs more equitably.

Let's look at another inequity. The existing average local representation on the region of Peel council shows that Mississauga averages 68,000 people per councillor, Brampton averages 54,200 and Caledon averages merely 10,200. It costs the city of Mississauga \$32 million per year to deliver services at two levels, rather than one.

Here is a partial list of some of the organizations that have written to support changes in the status quo in Mississauga: the Canadian Polish Congress, the Mississauga Sports Council, the Mississauga Board of Trade, the Serbian Cultural Association of Metropolitan Toronto and Mississauga, Hansa House, the Cypriot Community of Mississauga, and Carassauga.

Right now, Mississauga has 63% of the population and about 49% of the vote. Mississauga contributes 67% of Peel region's budget, with 63% of the population. Each of Mississauga's nine councillors represents more people than the entire city of Caledon. We need to enact Bill 186. We need to do it now. We need two more wards in Mississauga in time for the 2006 elections. It takes time to draw the ward boundaries and to put in place the proper procedures to do it sensibly and equitably.

If we must have the region of Peel, then it should work more effectively. Mississauga is well managed now. So are the other two cities, Brampton and Caledon. With half its regional council being Mississauga councillors, Peel region will still work well. My colleague from Brampton Centre asks for fairness on behalf of the city that she represents so capably. Bill 186 delivers just that. Peel region is only a governance structure. It can and it will evolve with the times. Life will go on.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to rise, and I do want to give full compliments to the member for Brampton Centre. I know it's not easy to stand in this place and to vote against your own government. I want to congratulate her on behalf of the opposition for having the courage to stand up on behalf of her own constituents, to come to this place, speak her mind and vote against the bill. I know it's not easy, when you work with the same colleagues every day, to take a different position on an issue. So I do want to say again to the member, congratulations for coming here and speaking your mind, for standing up for your principles and for your constituents.

I do hope as well that the other members for Brampton will similarly rise in this Legislature and use the member for Brampton Centre as a model to fight on behalf of

their constituents. It seems very clear by the attendance in the gallery here tonight, from what we've seen in the Brampton Guardian and what we hear from Brampton, that folks in the Brampton area are very, very concerned and strongly against Bill 186. So it seems only sensible to assume that the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and the other member for Brampton, whose riding, I apologize, slips my mind—the member for Brampton West—Mississauga—will similarly rise in the opportunity in this House to oppose this legislation, to reflect the views of their constituents in Brampton and hopefully cause the government not to proceed with this legislation. As you can hear from the opposition side, we similarly have great concerns with this particular bill.

I do believe what it got down to is that the mayor of Mississauga—a very accomplished politician, somebody with great experience and longevity as a result of that skill—has seen a lot of politicians come and go, and I think in Dalton McGuinty, the current Premier of the province of Ontario, she saw an easy mark: a man who would not stand by his promises and a man who would not stand on his principles. As a result, she got Dalton McGuinty to change his mind on several occasions. It shows the strength of the mayor of Mississauga. It doesn't say much—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I have to follow on the comments of the previous speaker to also give some accolades to the member from Brampton Centre. I have to say, reviewing some of the materials that I've looked into in regard to this issue, she has shown herself to be a very courageous member, not only because she's taken this quite unprecedented step, at least in my time here, of standing up against a government that's doing the wrong thing in this particular instance, but also in standing in concert with the community that she represents.

In looking at some of the materials that I have received from the good mayors who are here with us in the gallery tonight, it's very clear that her message is the very same as their message: Don't cherry-pick this report. Don't only choose the things that you think, because of pressure from another force—and we know what that force is, or should I say who that force is? Don't do that. Do what the judge's report said in its entirety, in its fulsomeness. Implement those recommendations. That is what this member is saying, that is what these mayors are saying, and that is what the judge said.

Judge Adams was very clear in terms of his recommendations. This government had a very easy go of it in terms of doing the right thing by these communities and not getting into the fray that they've gotten into. They didn't learn from the mistakes of the previous government in the way that it bungled and bongled around cherry-picking of the Who Does What commission and how that got implemented at the municipal level. They did the wrong thing then and you guys are doing the wrong thing now.



Congratulations to the member for Brampton Centre for standing up for her community, and shame on the rest of you for not listening to the wise advice of the judge you commissioned to look into this very issue.

1910

**Mr. Duguid:** I'm pleased to speak in response to the statements made by the members for Mississauga West and Brampton Centre. I want to thank all members from the Mississauga area, the members for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and Brampton West-Mississauga. They've spoken to myself and the minister and others very forcefully on this issue. They've expressed their views on this, and I thank them for that. I want to thank the member for Brampton Centre in particular for expressing her views here today and throughout consideration of these issues.

These are hard issues. When you're talking about allocating representation in a region, no matter what you do, it's difficult. It's very tough to come to terms with it for all involved.

I want to commend the member for Brampton Centre on her tenacity. She's brought forward her perspective forcefully and professionally throughout, and continues to do that. I and all members of caucus support her in her efforts to bring forward her position. We respect her and the position she's taken, but most of us, the majority of us, don't agree with it. It's not out of lack of respect; it's because we feel that the position we've taken is fair and balanced.

We hired Justice Adams not to dictate to us what the decision should be, but to give us advice as to where we should go with this. We considered his advice and, frankly, we accepted and support most of the recommendations he made. However, what we disagree with is the suggestion that we should allocate representation based on future projections of population rather than current population. We just don't feel that's a direction we should be going in.

This legislation is fair and balanced in the approach that it brings. It ensures that it reflects the concept of better representation by population. It will provide much-needed stability to Peel region to help ensure that Peel region council can move forward, turn its full attention to providing the effective services—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Tascona:** I'm certainly pleased to join in the debate here. Listening to the members across the way, they say they support and admire the member from Brampton Centre, but they're not listening to her. In fact, what they are doing is patronizing her.

The bottom line is, they asked for a report from a respected justice, George Adams, to give them direction in terms of how to deal with this issue. He came up with a solution that everybody bought into, and this government didn't even listen. They're still not listening, because they said the report is not something they're going to follow. They are being pressured by another municipality, which they decided to listen to. Of course, the

members from Mississauga are pleased, because they're not on the spot. Certainly the member from Brampton Centre is on the spot, and she's here. The silence from the other members, from Brampton West-Mississauga and Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, is deafening. Silence. But we hear from the member from Brampton Centre. She's in a tough spot.

If she decided to resign, who could blame her? She didn't come into this to be lambasted and centred out by her own government with respect to dealing with an issue that will fundamentally change the powers within her own riding. She didn't come into this for that.

**Mr. Duguid:** You're full of it.

**Mr. Tascona:** Don't tell me I'm full of it, member for Scarborough Centre. What am I full of, member for Scarborough Centre? You're nothing but a patronizing little politician from Toronto who basically—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Would the member please take his seat. I would ask the House to come to order.

I'll return to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

**Mr. Tascona:** The member from the opposite side is trying to get me going, but I'm going to listen to the debate because we want to be fair and balanced. That's what it's all about, fair and balanced, isn't it? Is it fair and balanced for the members from Brampton? I hardly think so. It is not fair and balanced.

**The Acting Speaker:** One of the government members has two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Jeffrey:** It is my honour to wrap up this speech and speak for the last time on Bill 186. I thank the member from Erie-Lincoln, Hamilton East, Scarborough Centre and Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for their comments tonight on this issue. I guess I would like to wrap up by saying that after last night's debate on this issue, my mayor, Mayor Fennell, and Mayor Morrison from Caledon wrote a letter to Minister Gerretsen. They had four points to make, and I would like to say them here in the Legislature because most members won't have seen the letters.

The first one is that the legislation isn't acceptable.

They are respectfully requesting that the public hearings be held in Brampton and Caledon after adequate public notice is given.

They suggest that the legislation is seriously flawed.

And they suggest that the recommendations of Justice Adams should have been followed if there was to be legislation.

I guess the best way to fix this legislation, in my opinion, would be for an amendment to have some kind of trigger or formula that would adjust for population growth. The current legislation, as it stands now, has no opportunity for when my community grows. We know that Brampton will likely be bigger than Mississauga. We expect it to grow to over 600,000, and the current legislation has nothing in it that would allow for that growth. So there needs to be some opportunity for that discussion

or review to occur, and I would hope that when we get to public meetings, that opportunity would exist.

Finally, I would like to quote something that Justice Adams said. He said, finally, that "Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon are not endlessly robust, nor is their relationship." He said that these important municipalities need the support from the province. I would ask that people give that thought when they cast their vote. It's important that we do the right thing while we're in this House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** At the outset of this debate, I want to speak to the member for Brampton Centre, and this is very genuine. I think this is important, that members stand up and represent their ridings. Very few members have the guts and the courage to do that. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that, and that really should be seen as an element of strength from the government, not an element of weakness. I think our leader, John Tory, has tried emphasize this in recent months, and I think it's a good thing, whether in government or in opposition. I want to congratulate the member. Being the first one, I can appreciate, is difficult, and I would be the first to condemn someone for not doing it. Good for you. I really mean that sincerely. You have a lot of guts.

This bill has an interesting pedigree. I suppose the difference, for people in Brampton and Caledon—Dalton McGuinty is breaking his promise to you. Why should he treat you any differently than anyone else? Why should he treat you differently than autistic children? Why should he treat you differently than—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Nepean-Carleton to address his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr. Baird:** Why should Dalton McGuinty treat these good people from Brampton and Caledon any differently than autistic children? Why should he treat them any differently than middle-class taxpayers? Why should he treat them differently than people who wanted a balanced budget? Why should he treat them differently from people who wanted new provincial money going to child care? I say to the good folks from Brampton and Caledon that Dalton McGuinty is treating them fairly, because he is breaking just as many promises to them as he did to everyone else. I know that's a terrible thing to say.

1920

The fact that there is such a big contingent out here from Peel region shows the amount of concern for this bill. Mayor Marolyn Morrison is here from Caledon to express the concerns of her municipality. I know the member for Caledon, the hard-working member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, will be here the next time this bill is debated. He couldn't be here today, but he will be here to speak to this bill, because I know that it is something that's very important to that member. Mayor Susan Fennell from Brampton is here to express the concerns of the 420,000 people who live in Brampton.

I find this legislation, Bill 186, to be rather interesting. It contradicts other legislation. The minister of infrastructure brought in this legislation, Places to Grow, which identified Brampton as one of the places to grow, as a place for great expansion and development and homes for folks. This legislation seems to go au contraire to that piece of legislation that we debated earlier.

I would be remiss if I didn't say that of the regional councillors from Peel, Elaine Moore is here, Gael Miles is here, John Sprovieri is here. John Sprovieri is a good fellow. Is it Sprovieri or—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Baird:** Sprovieri. I think we're going to hear a lot more about this guy in the coming—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would remind the member for Nepean-Carleton, you can't converse with the people in the gallery while you have the floor. I know you know that. I would ask you once again to make your comments through the Chair.

**Mr. Baird:** I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that John Sprovieri is a man that we're likely to hear a terrific amount from in the future. I look forward to the chance of working with him in the future.

We also have some city councillors. I don't think I've seen four city councillors visit this place to show their concern by their presence here. We have city councillors Grant Gibson, Sandra Hames and Bob Callahan, who I have to tell you is a former member of provincial Parliament. I know, Speaker, that you would want to recognize the presence in the gallery of Bob Callahan, someone who served his constituency well in this place for many years. I'm not a student of political history, but I think that he had the courage and the guts—I mean, with great respect to the member for Brampton Centre, this fellow had the courage to run in Brampton, I think when the member was William Grenville Davis. Is that not true? Now that is courage and guts, to run against William Grenville Davis in Brampton, let alone anywhere else in Ontario. Of course, he had the good fortune to serve in this place for many years.

We also have city councillor Garnett Manning with us. So you have a terrific delegation, both from Caledon and from the burgeoning metropolis of Brampton, who are here to express their concerns.

Dalton McGuinty said a number of things, and I want to put them on the record because I think it's worthwhile. This bill is just another example of Dalton McGuinty saying one thing and doing another. The McGuinty Liberals are rather selective when it comes to listening to the demands of municipalities in the province of Ontario when it comes to municipal restructuring. The McGuinty government has failed to listen to numerous municipalities when they were complaining about the greenbelt. I see the member for Erie-Lincoln is here. We have had no better champion of municipalities and municipal authority and local autonomy than the member for Erie-Lincoln. He's done a lot of hard work, and they failed to listen to the concerns, the reasonable concerns, about the greenbelt legislation when he brought them forward.



This bill makes me uncomfortable because it pits Mississauga against Brampton and Caledon. I had thought that Dalton McGuinty was here to be a uniter, not a divider. That's unfortunate. Perhaps he should look to Mike Harris, who is always trying to bring people together to find a compromise, a solution.

Again, I congratulate—I genuinely mean this. It shouldn't be a big deal, but it is. On municipal restructuring, I know that we dealt with a very difficult issue in my own constituency, so I have a lot of admiration for my colleague opposite.

I wonder, though, how many MPPs do they have in Brampton? Why do we only have one standing up in her place right now? The other members for Brampton—one of them has a good excuse; I'll concede that—are missing in action. We haven't seen them. One of them, Mr. Dhillon, has a good excuse; his wife just had a baby. Good for him. His wife just had a baby, and that's a good excuse. I would be remiss if I didn't say that.

Why did this bill come into play? One member of the Legislature said, "I look at the efforts that [Mississauga] Mayor Hazel McCallion has exerted over the last little while, and I'm frustrated that her bullying and her intimidation tactics appear to have worked."

I've got to tell you that I was elected to this place, and the best political advice I have ever received from a member of this Legislature came from Gerry Phillips, the Chair of Management Board. He said there are three people you don't mess with. You don't mess with Don Cherry, you don't mess with Mel Lastman and you don't mess with Hazel McCallion. That's not bad advice, because it's tough. The mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, once phoned and threatened to kill me, when I was the Minister of Energy. I think she said something like—

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Along with a whole lot of other people.

**Mr. Baird:** The member opposite has my private line at his desk, I guess, and still gets calls.

I got this call from this hysterical woman saying to me, "Mr. Minister, I've got a double-barrelled shotgun, it's blazing and it's got your name on it." I said, "Who the heck is this?" Then I looked at the call display, and it said, "City of Mississauga, Mayor's office," and I believe it was Her Worship offering her suggestions as to my energy policy. I know she can exert considerable influence, but it's important that reason prevail, that it's not just that the person who demands the loudest wins; that there be some reason in place.

I read also in the Toronto Star on April 14: "Brampton Mayor Susan Fennell said she isn't sure what to do about the legislation because she's still reeling from the 'heavy-handed, record-breaking speed' of it. 'The Premier specifically said, 'Susan, this government did not run on municipal restructuring and we are not interested in restructuring,'" Fennell said." I guess they're on a first-name basis. That was the Brampton mayor, Her Worship Susan Fennell, in the Toronto Star.

Why are we here debating this? I know someone who has visited Peel: Judge Gomery, who is now heading up a public inquiry in Montreal. He visited Peel once. Do you know who Judge Gomery is?

**Mr. Bisson:** No, tell me.

**Mr. Baird:** The member wants to know who Judge Gomery is. Judge Gomery is investigating the theft of money from the taxpayers of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. He's conducting a public inquiry in Montreal looking into all of the money that was stolen from residents of Brampton, Peel, Caledon and Mississauga. Judge Gomery was once in Peel.

**Mr. Bisson:** He was in Brampton.

**Mr. Baird:** He was in Brampton, I'm sure. I'm sure that one of my friends, a regional councillor from Brampton—John, you can tell me that Judge Gomery is investigating the theft of those people in Brampton's money. The Liberal Party of Canada operatives took this money and gave it to their friends, in the guise of national unity. Judge Gomery was in Peel region once. That's where some of that money went. I would be remiss if I didn't put that on the record.

There are a lot of taxpayers from Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga, who work very hard and whose priority is that that money from their taxpayers' dollars should be going toward health care in Brampton, toward health care for residents of Caledon, toward health care in Mississauga. That's where the money should be going, not to the friends of the Liberal Party of Canada in Quebec. I think that's important to put on the record.

1930

Let's look back to this issue, Mr. Speaker, because I know you want me to get back to the bill. I can see in your eyes that you're wanting to be an encouragement to me.

January 2004: Premier McGuinty states that restructuring is not on the agenda. June 2004: Finance Minister Greg Sorbara confirms that the government has no intention of moving forward with restructuring. These are the same people who said they wouldn't raise your taxes two weeks before the budget, yet they did. I will confess this: They're treating people in Caledon and Brampton fairly, because they said one thing to them and then did another. That's what they did to people in Nepean and Ottawa West. They say one thing before the election and another thing after. I'll tell you, they say one thing after the election and another thing two months later.

The Minister of Education has been getting up in this House and has been bragging that there are going to be no school closures. We look at St. Thomas School in the former city of Nepean, which is being closed under the guise of Minister Kennedy's regulations. They change the school boundaries, so the school population plummets and then, all of a sudden, under the Kennedy rules, they've found the loophole. The Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board is a crafty board. They're a very good board. They found the loophole in the Kennedy school closure formula, and now they're trying to close St. Thomas School. I'll tell you, there are a lot of folks in

Nepean who are tremendously concerned about that. I think some of those folks in Nepean who are concerned about the closure of St. Thomas School have friends and relatives in Brampton.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Baird:** I do support equity in education, and I do support people of faith wanting to send their children to religious schools. I had a parent who came to me and said, "My child going to a religious school is important to me. It's important to my values, and it's important to my faith." That person is a Catholic, so they're entitled to taxpayer money for their school, so it's OK, but there are others who might be Baptist or another type of Christian or Jewish, wanting to send their child to a parochial school and—

**Mr. Bisson:** Buddhist.

**Mr. Baird:** Buddhist. They might be South Asian; it might be a Sikh school. I support people being able to send their children to a religious school and get some sort of tax credit for that, because I support the multicultural and multi-religious face in our province. I think if a parent takes an interest in their child's education, that's a good thing. The government should want to support parental choice. This government supports choice only when it's their choice. They are pro-choice as long as you take the government's choice.

**Mr. Bisson:** They chose Gomery, right?

**Mr. Baird:** Paul Martin chose Justice Gomery, and he's investigating the millions of dollars that were stolen from taxpayers in Canada, stolen right out of municipalities like Peel and communities like Nepean and Ottawa West. Dalton McGuinty has been fighting for the fiscal imbalance. He's a Dalton-come-lately on this issue, I argue, but I'm with him. I think there should be a dialogue. Certainly no Conservative will guarantee that every question will be addressed, but there should be a dialogue on this issue, whether it's immigration, whether it's health care—and I see the Minister of Health is here, diligently working away on behalf of the patients of the province. There should be a dialogue on this issue. No one can say—certainly I can't—that there will be an amicable solution to every issue, but where there's a will, there's a way.

I talked to the Minister of Finance earlier today, and I asked him, as an opposition member, if I could have a briefing on this fiscal month. He said certainly, and I appreciate that. This is not an issue about Dalton McGuinty or the Liberal government, nor was it one about Bob Rae when he brought it up, nor was it one about Mike Harris when he brought it up in one of the finance minister's budgets over the last few years; it's about hospitals and municipalities in this province, which are providing the bulk of services to the people in Ontario, and we hope to get it addressed.

I want to return to the issue of Judge Adams, Mr. Speaker, because I know you want me to. Judge Adams was asked to facilitate and help get to the bottom of this issue, to find out if someone independent could be brought in to find an amicable solution to this. Well, they

threw Judge Adams's recommendations right into the garbage. Cherry-picking: "We'll pick the parts we like and we'll pick the parts we don't like." I don't think that's the way to go.

I want to quote again from a city of Brampton press release: "The Premier gave me his word that there would be no restructuring in Peel." Let me repeat that: "The Premier gave me his word that there would be no restructuring in Peel," said Mayor Fennell.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** How's the membership drive going?

**Mr. Baird:** Finished. I say to the member for Peterborough, it went well.

I'm going to quote again from this press release: "This Premier gave me his word that governance was not on his government's agenda. I want to believe that this Premier's word is gold, not coal." This is not the statement of one woman in Brampton. This is the statement of the representative of 420,000 people in Brampton whose face was slapped, who cannot go to the bank on her Premier's word.

On behalf of the people of Ontario, I'm sorry. You should be able to take the Premier of Ontario's word and when he makes a commitment that he'll be honour bound to uphold it. His word should be his bond with the people. But we're here, and that's not the case. We know why, because Linda Jeffrey said in the Toronto Star that it was the efforts of one woman out there doing this. Please don't send me any hate mail, Mayor. To the one mayor who's not here, I don't want any hate mail or any phone calls.

**Mr. Delaney:** John, it's OK. She's in India.

**Mr. Baird:** I'm told she's in India. Is she in India?

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Baird:** Oh, Tanzania. Thank goodness she's not here, because I would get in trouble.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Why are you not respecting the rules of the House?

**Mr. Baird:** Here we have the Minister of Health preaching the rules of this place, which is rather interesting.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You're putting these people in a bad position.

**Mr. Baird:** I'm not. Are you in a bad position?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** You're answering back.

**Mr. Baird:** They're not in a bad position at all.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Nepean-Caledon's time has almost elapsed, but I will ask him one more time, please do not engage in conversation with the people visiting us tonight.

**Mr. Baird:** Speaker, I won't. Don't respond when I talk.

I agree with the representatives who are here, whether it's Mayor Marolyn Morrison of Caledon, who is deeply concerned about the representation of her community and took the time to come to this place to show her concern by her mere presence, as Mayor Fennell did, as did a number of councillors from both Peel and Brampton, to



hope that members will listen. We will demand hearings in Brampton or Caledon on this issue to ensure that their voices are heard.

**The Acting Speaker:** I must say once again to the people who have joined us tonight to listen to the debate that we are delighted to have you here, but while the debate is going on, you can't talk to any of the members in the House.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bisson:** The problem is that the people here with us tonight would love to be on the floor of the House to debate this. Only one member from the Brampton region is prepared to speak out for them, and then only for five minutes. Representatives from the area being affected are being silent on this legislation, except for Mrs. Jeffrey, who only spoke for five minutes and then gave accolades about being a Liberal and talked about how great that was. They would like to have the opportunity to come in here and speak, so they're frustrated. You have to understand why it is they would like to participate. So I just have to say upfront that there is a certain amount of frustration.

Let's be clear. What's happening here is simply this: There are processes under the Municipal Act currently that would allow the regional municipality of Peel, Mississauga, Caledon and Brampton to deal as they choose with how they grow—not grow, but change the composition of the regional council of Peel. Those mechanisms currently exist under the Municipal Act.

The government decided to appoint Judge Adams to give recommendations to do something different than would have happened if the municipalities themselves had been able to deal with this under the current auspices of Municipal Act. Instead, the government is not even accepting the recommendations of their own appointee. They're turning around and saying, "We're going to do what we want. We're basically going to guarantee that if there's any growth in population in Caledon and Brampton, it won't be recognized on Peel regional council."

I don't understand why the government is taking this position. I expect this government understands the basic ideas of democracy, and that is that as population grows in an area, they get a larger amount of representation, and the population dictates what the representation should be.

1940

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I listened attentively to the member from Ottawa, soon to be running federally. Let me just say in summarizing his speech and to paraphrase Churchill, "Never in the history of parliamentary debate has so little been said by so few for so long."

The member failed to address the bill. The member failed to address many issues. Let me remind you that this is an issue of representation by population—pure and simple. Mississauga has 63% of the population, 67% of expenses, 66% of the property tax and 49% of the vote. It will be 12, seven and five, as I understand it, on this restructuring.

I urge my friends from Brampton to be very careful about climbing into bed with these Conservatives. Ask

some former members of council from North York or from Etobicoke or from York East or from Scarborough about their record on municipal governance and holding hands with that provincial government and how gentle they were.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd ask the House to come to order.

Minister of Energy?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The final insult, in listening to that little diatribe, is the William Osler Health Centre. For eight years that government did nothing. That government refused to respond to the community of Brampton's needs. This government kept its word on William Osler and has committed half a billion dollars to that health centre. This government is doing the right thing on rep by pop. This government did the right thing on William Osler. This government's doing the right thing by Peel region.

**Mr. Tascona:** I don't know what the House leader was listening to, but I listened very attentively to the member from Nepean—Carleton, who spoke with passion and, on more than one occasion, directly to the people from Caledon and Brampton who are here tonight.

Let's be clear. What's going on here is the old two-step. The bottom line is that they're going to give Mississauga the majority with respect to voting power, but really the next step will be that Mississauga is going to be separated from Brampton and Caledon. That's where we're going. That's what they want. This is the first step. Once this is absorbed, then you're going to find that Mississauga will wonder why they should be part of the region, because they've got the majority of the votes and really they should be separated from it. At that time, the government will hope that will satisfy the people of Brampton and Caledon, because then they could say, "I guess we're not going to be part of this. We don't have to be under Mississauga's rule. We're going to be in a situation where we can be on our own and independent." It's not something that hasn't happened before, separated cities within a county, as the city of Barrie separated from the county of Simcoe, and so has the city of Orillia. That's where we're headed. It's the old two-step.

When the House leader says Brampton wasn't properly represented, with respect, they were properly represented. The members worked very hard for those people, as members worked hard when Liberals represented that area. Brampton has been properly represented over the years by some very good members, starting with William Davis.

I look forward to the response from the member from Nepean—Carleton.

**Ms. Horwath:** My opinion, having heard from some of other speakers, is that the member from Nepean—Carleton raised some significant issues with regard to Bill 186, particularly the issues around fairness, which does not exist in this bill, and the fact that there is extreme dissatisfaction from the members of Peel region, or let's just say some of the members of Peel region,

about this bill, not only in terms of its content but also in terms of the process by which the government came up with this bill. If that weren't the case, I wouldn't have seen these wonderful people here both tonight and last night, and I wouldn't have heard from Mayor Susan Fennell from Brampton and Mayor Marolyn Morrison from Caledon that they have some serious concerns, which I'm looking forward to dealing with in my own debate later on.

I do have to say that there is a fundamental flaw in this piece of legislation, and it is, once again, that the government has taken it upon itself to get the best advice possible from this retired judge, from this justice, and then gone ahead and not gone through with that advice. So they took the confidence of the people involved in this particular matter and made them think that they were coming up with a solution that was going to be worthwhile for everyone and that was going to consider everyone's needs not only in the future, but also in 2006 and 2009. Let's be clear: That's what this judge did. He didn't talk about just what's happening now, but what's going to be happening as growth occurs in the next three and six years. What did the government choose to do? They chose to cherry-pick those recommendations and thereby lost the confidence of these very bright people from Brampton and Caledon, and I don't blame them.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Nepean-Carleton.

**Mr. Baird:** I want to thank the members for Timmins-James Bay and Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, my good friend the Minister of Energy, and the member for Hamilton East.

The Minister of Energy's comments were rather interesting. He made an argument but didn't refute Dalton McGuinty's promises. He didn't say, "Oh, Dalton McGuinty never said that. You're mistaken. We haven't changed our minds. We haven't flip-flopped. We didn't break any promises." No defence on any of those charges. So, given that the Premier of Ontario faced an indictment for breaking promises in my remarks and the government has failed to put up a defence, I guess he's guilty in absentia, guilty of breaking promises and of not living up to the commitments and not living up to his word.

I hope that when this bill can go to committee—and I'll tell you, no one has fought harder for this bill to go to committee than the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, who will be here to debate another issue and who certainly has spoken up significantly in caucus and weighed in on this and the concerns. We hope this bill will go to committee. We hope the government will try something new, that they'll listen to the wisdom of the area residents, the wisdom of the member for Brampton Centre, who I want to again congratulate for having the guts to get up, and that's not difficult. I genuinely mean that. That should be something that happens more in this place. We have tried to lead the way on the opposition side, particularly in the last six months, and that sort of

thing should be encouraged more often. I really do think it's important. It will lead to better legislation in this House, and hopefully the government will listen and learn and make this bill a better bill before it comes back for third reading.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**M. Bisson:** Je veux prendre cette opportunité, avant de commencer le débat, de reconnaître mes deux amis qui sont ici ce soir, M. et M<sup>me</sup> Nadeau de Kapuskasing, Ontario. On dit bonjour parce que M. Denis et M<sup>me</sup> Hélène Nadeau sont les organisateurs du plus grand tournoi d'échecs en Amérique du Nord. On vous demande de vous présenter, puis on vous applaudit.

I was just saying that in the gallery with us tonight are Denis and Hélène Nadeau from Kapuskasing. There's an interesting story here, because this is a story of a small town doing really great, big things. They are the organizers of the most successful chess tournament in Canada and in North America. They've held the largest chess tournament in North America two years running in Kapuskasing, Ontario, as a result of the work that has been done by these two individuals. So we congratulate them.

I put the government on notice: two years from now—not this year but next—Trillium applications, NOHFC applications are coming, because we need to support this program.

**Mr. Delaney:** You got it.

**Mr. Bisson:** My good friend the whip says, "You got it." There we go; the grants are in the mail.

Back to the point: I have to speak to the bill, because not only is that the rule of this assembly but, quite frankly, I think we owe it to the people of Peel region. Let's review where we're at. The government, for reasons we can understand to a certain extent, have decided they want to make some changes to the regional council of Peel. Now, some people may disagree with where this government is going. I am one of them. We need to ask ourselves why the government is doing what it is doing now.

**1950**

Here's the issue. We know the demographics are changing in Toronto and the province overall. A huge number of people are moving into Ontario, locating in the communities of Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon. We know that these places are booming and growing—there's a huge amount of development going on—and services need to be provided by those municipalities to the local citizens. The regional council of Peel deals with many of the issues that are common to the communities affected by the regional council.

Currently, we have a situation where about 50%, just slightly more, of those people on the regional council of Peel are representatives of the city of Mississauga, and the balance are from Brampton and Caledon. That's the current composition of the regional council of Peel. Where we find ourselves is that there is a huge increase in population. As we look at the numbers, we know that the city of Brampton, the city of Mississauga and Cal-



edon are going to increase in the years to come. Where we're at is simply this: The government is institutionalizing in this legislation a situation where, if the population in the communities of Brampton and Caledon were to exceed that of Mississauga, Mississauga would have a majority of the people on the regional council of Peel, making decisions for the region.

You ask yourself, why is the government doing this? Why? I ask you the question. Why would we have a government that says, as Mr. Dalton McGuinty and Mr. Gerretsen, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, are saying, we are going to allow a situation where, if the population of the cities of Brampton and Caledon exceeds that of Mississauga, they will be in the minority on Peel regional council? Why would any government do that?

Speaker, you were here. You remember the debates on the megacity. You remember the debates on the whole issue of amalgamation. One of things the Liberals argued—and I would say it's one reason why some of the Liberals today stood in the last election and were elected as MPPs in their ridings—was that they did not agree with amalgamation, the forced amalgamation by the province, that said, "The province knows best. We're not going to listen to the municipalities through a referendum. We're only going to listen to the government of Ontario and the cabinet by way of decree about what's going to happen in those communities."

We remember well what happened in the city of Toronto, the city of Sudbury, the city of Ottawa, the city of Hamilton and others.

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** Chatham-Kent.

**Mr. Bisson:** Chatham-Kent. Oh my God, do we remember what happened in Chatham-Kent. We remember that the residents of those municipalities where there were referendums voted by a huge majority to say no to the amalgamation of their cities. Toronto, East York, all the boroughs and cities that made up what is now the city of Toronto, when it came to a referendum, said by about 75% in a plebiscite vote that they did not want to have amalgamation.

We had the Liberals of the day in opposition to the government. I remember Madame Papatello, Mr. Smitherman, Mr. Levac—I can name them all; those who are in cabinet today—railing on this side of the House at the government imposing its view on what local municipal governments should be like when it comes to representation. I remember that debate, because I was a member of an opposition party that opposed the amalgamation of the city of Toronto, as did my good friend Mr. Smitherman, the Minister of Health, for whom I have great regard.

I want to digress. Mr. Smitherman is a good Minister of Health who responds to a number of local issues across our communities, and I give him credit. However, I can't believe that George Smitherman, of the city of Toronto, who opposed amalgamation, would take a position that says, "We're going to impose the views of

cabinet on the communities in the regional council of Peel." Why would we do that? Why?

**Interjection:** It's not amalgamation.

**Mr. Bisson:** Well, it's akin to amalgamation.

**Interjection:** No, it's not.

**Mr. Bisson:** Oh, you guys are really good at making debates when it suits your purpose on a particular issue. I remember the debates in this Legislature. The Liberals stood in this House, right over there where the Tories are now, as the official opposition. They railed at the Conservatives and said, "You have to listen to the majority of the people in the city of Toronto and others who have voted by plebiscite to say no to amalgamation." They were terribly upset and held up this House, with New Democrats, during the megacity debate to try to stop the government's forced amalgamation of the city of Toronto and others. Do we remember these guys? Oh man, they were doing all kinds of stuff in here.

So I thought the Liberals had credibility. I said to myself, what the Liberals say in opposition is going to be what they do when they come into government, should they form a government, and they're not going to force on any local municipality what they don't want. I took them at their word. But I look at them now and say, "My, my, what happened?" These Liberals in opposition said, "We believe in local autonomy. We believe in local government. We believe in giving local government the necessary tools. We're going to respect municipalities and we're going to do what's right." Instead, through this legislation they've said that even if the population of the cities of Brampton and Caledon increases above that of Mississauga overall, they have institutionalized a majority for the city of Mississauga on Peel regional council.

That's wrong. If Mississauga has a majority, they deserve a majority on Peel regional council. There's nothing wrong with that. But if Brampton and the other communities together end up with a majority of the population, we need a mechanism that says that the other communities will have control, through a majority, of what happens at Peel regional council.

I go back to what my friend Mr. Bradley, the Minister of Tourism, one of the deans of the Legislature, said yesterday: "Why are you guys afraid of Hazel McCallion?" He kept saying that yesterday. He said that in the House. I sat there and said, "We're afraid of Hazel McCallion? We New Democrats? The Conservatives are afraid of Hazel McCallion?" Who's afraid of Hazel McCallion in this Legislature? It's Dalton McGuinty. It's Mr. Gerretsen. They're trembling in their boots. They're saying, "Hazel, we're going to keep your majority no matter what happens." Poor Dalton—well, never mind "poor Dalton." Poor representatives on Peel regional council of the cities of Caledon and Brampton, who find themselves in the situation that their government is neutering their communities in terms of their ability to have fair representation on regional council. They have sold these members down the river.

Is it likely that a New Democrat will be elected to Peel regional council in the next election? I hope so, but I

know that's an uphill struggle. Who knows? I'm a believer. I'm like the little engine that doesn't stop. I keep on working, hoping it's going to happen. But I recognize that this debate is not about we New Democrats winning seats in those communities in the next election. At the end of the day, if there's going to be a turnover, it will probably end up going to the Tories.

I just say, why would the Liberal government today do something against the basic right of democracy, which is representation by population? Have a mechanism in the bill that says that as the population in these communities changes, there will be a change in representation on Peel regional council, or do what the current Municipal Act says and leave it up to the communities themselves to deal with it at regional council. Instead, they're saying to the members—I couldn't imagine being one of the three Brampton MPPs, being sold out by my own government.  
**2000**

I want to say to my good friends from Kapuskasing—I've been down this road before—that if I were a member of a government that was about to sell out my communities, I know which side I would fall on. "The heck with the government. I'm there to represent the people." These people were here. I say to my friends up there, Monsieur and Madame Nadeau, that when we went through the whole exercise in Kapuskasing in terms of employee ownership of Tembec, which was Kimberly-Clark, I was one of the guys who turned and said to my government, "We're wrong. We have to allow the community an opportunity to restructure." At the end of the day, the people came down here and protested, and myself and Len Wood and Shelley Martel and Howard Hampton and other northern members forced our government into making a decision. We stood up for our communities and we won the day. Kapuskasing survived and thrived; otherwise, it would probably not have been what it is today.

Members from Brampton, where are you? Mrs. Jeffrey, for whom I have great respect, has courage. She's going to stand in this House and vote against the legislation. But I say you've got to do more than vote against the legislation, Mrs. Jeffrey. You have to advocate on behalf of your community, along with your two colleagues from Brampton. You have to go in and talk to your caucus and to cabinet members about not allowing this legislation to go forward and, at the end of the day, defeat this legislation. That's what Shelley Martel, Gilles Bisson, Len Wood, Howard Hampton and—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member to make his comments through the Chair and, when he's referring to another member of the House, refer to their riding name or their ministry name, not their surname.

**Mr. Bisson:** Speaker, thank you for reminding me about that, because sometimes I get carried away, I admit.

The members for those ridings have to do what we did in northern Ontario, and that is to try to convince those people in cabinet and all those people in caucus that this is a bad bill for their communities and that we have to

overturn it. I say to those particular members that it's not good enough to get up for five minutes in the House and give a speech. You've really got to do the work that has to be done to convince your colleagues that this is bad legislation.

The government House leader across the way is a good friend of mine, Mr. Duncan, an honourable member. He loves to read Churchill; I notice that in the House all the time. I say to him, if you brought legislation into this House that gave northern Ontario a majority in this Legislature, as you are doing with the city of Mississauga, should Mississauga's population decrease against both Brampton and Caledon, I would vote for it, I've got to tell you, because it would be a great thing for northern Ontario. But I recognize that there is a principle of representation by population. The number of ridings in this Legislature is based on the number of people in the province. I understand—I don't like it, but I understand and accept it to a certain extent—that northern Ontario's population of about a million is about a tenth of the overall population of the province, so we end up with about a tenth of the representation in this Legislature. Our own act that determines how many representatives are in the Legislature of Ontario bases that on the population of our regions, so northern Ontario, with about 10% or 11% of the population, ends up with about 10% or 11% of the representation in the House. I understand that that's an uphill battle for us in northern Ontario, as it is for other regions—Ottawa, central Ontario, south-western Ontario and other regions that find themselves in the same situation—but we have accepted that that is a principle of democracy. We need to give in this legislation the same principle in terms of representation to the people who live in Peel region.

I also want to speak to another issue in this bill that I think is a little sad. What you've done, in the way you're structuring the new Peel regional council, sets up a situation where they could end up with a tie vote. If all those people at regional council, including the chair, were to vote in such a way that there was a tie, what do they do if there is a deadlock? According to the member from—I forget his riding; Mr. Duguid—Scarborough Centre, those people on the council would then have to go back and have some more discussion and they would have to try to find some way to break the deadlock. I understand that and respect that, but the current legislation basically says that if no accommodation can be made for a deadlock vote on Peel council, the matter will be referred to the cabinet of Ontario. Why should we end up in a situation where, at the end of the day, the cabinet of Ontario is going to make a decision for the people of Peel? That makes no sense.

It seems to me that a couple of things have to happen. We need to make sure that representation on the council is devised in such a way that it reflects the number of people living in each of the communities. The other thing we have to do is make sure that we don't end up, if at all possible—it might be a little more difficult, but we've got to figure out how to do it—with a clause in the bill



that says cabinet can decide what is best for those communities, given a deadlock on Peel regional council. I say to the government, that's one particular section of the bill that we need to give some thought to.

I come to the last part of this debate, and that is public hearings. It will be interesting to see if the government is prepared to allow this bill to travel to the communities of Brampton during the intersession, after the House rises on June 9.

**Mr. Dunlop:** No, they won't.

**Mr. Bisson:** I know where they're going, but traditionally in this House, a government introduces a bill in the spring; the bill is debated at second reading and is referred to committee during the intersession for public hearings. There's ample time for hearings this summer.

We say to the government that this summer you should allow this bill to travel for a couple of days or however many days are necessary to allow the people of Mississauga and Caledon and Brampton, all those who are interested, to speak on this bill so that we, as legislators, make sure to get it right. Will this government have the courage to do what has traditionally been done in this House: finish second reading debate this spring, refer the bill to committee, allow the committee to travel during the intersession this summer to do what it has to do in terms of public hearings, have the bill come back for clause-by-clause in committee to deal with amendments, and then bring the bill back to the House for third reading, at which point we make a decision in this House based on the public hearings?

My guess is that the government House leader is going to ride gunshot on this process. The government House leader is going to say, "We've got to pass this legislation now." I see my good friend Mr. Bill Wrye in the back. They are going to say, in the government House leader's office, "We want second reading now. We want to have public hearings now: one day in Toronto. We're not going to travel. We want third reading this spring." That's rather unfortunate. When you rush legislation through the House and don't allow the public to comment on the legislation before us, I think it does a discredit, especially if the bill is controversial. If the bill is not controversial, there is less need for public hearings.

For example, we have the adoption disclosure bill. I would argue that that has had all kinds of hearings until now and we're probably ready as a House to move forward on it. We don't have as great a need to do public hearings on a bill like that. But on a bill like this, when we know that the councils of two of the three communities being affected by the bill are opposed, it seems to me that there are enough problems in how the bill is seen that we should allow the bill to travel somewhat.

My good friend the whip from the government side probably agrees with me, because he is a pretty decent guy. If the government whip were to run this House, we probably would do a lot better when it comes to getting deals in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Delaney:** Je veux dire merci à mon collègue de Timmins—James Bay. My colleague from Timmins—James Bay bases his remarks on an assumption that growth in the city of Mississauga is slowing or is even flat, but nothing could be further from the truth. Each year, the city of Mississauga becomes home to 20,000 new people. By this time next year, Mississauga will be more populous than the province of New Brunswick. Brampton is already about the size of Regina and Saskatoon put together. Caledon is five times the size of St. Marys, Ontario, and St. Marys doesn't have regional government.

Mississauga has something in common with the government of Ontario. Ontario chafes with its \$23-billion gap within the Canadian confederation. Mississauga has a \$32-million gap with the region of Peel. Rebalancing the vote to get closer to representation by population is a small first step. Representing the city of Mississauga, I would have wanted much more from any bill changing the status quo in Peel region.

I also want to say something about Mayor Hazel McCallion. We in Mississauga have a mayor who is one of the great civic figures of our time. Mayor McCallion is a mayor who can stand on the same plane as Jean Drapeau of Montreal, Charlotte Whitten of Ottawa, Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem, Willy Brandt of Berlin and Ed Koch of New York. We in Mississauga are proud of Mayor McCallion and prouder still of the debt-free, well-run, well-planned city that grew on her watch. That type of good sense and forward thinking is in part what helps make the region of Peel work on an ongoing basis, and that's part of the benefit to the residents of all three cities of Bill 186.

2010

**Mr. John Yakubuski (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 186 this evening. What we've got here is a total disregard for consistency and democracy. Last night I heard the member for Scarborough Centre say that they had to do this because they had to respect representation by population, yet this government has done exactly the opposite in determining that they're going to put 11 seats in northern Ontario. So on one hand, they care about population and on the other hand, they don't. Then when Fort Erie asked for some involvement by the government with regard to realigning their situation, they said, "Sorry, we don't get involved in municipal affairs."

It's all about politics and it's all about numbers. This government will do whatever it thinks is going to assist them from the point of view of politics. It doesn't matter if it's right or wrong or indifferent. They put up their finger and say, "Will this assist us from a political point of view?" That is one heck of a crass way to run the Legislature and bring in legislation in Ontario. They're paying no regard to what is right or wrong. They have no consistency. Whatever they decide in their mind is going to benefit them the most come the next election, that's what they're going to do.

However, people see through that kind of stuff. They expect governments to show consistency. This government is opportunistic, and it is wrong. It has decided, "You know what? We're looking at the numbers and I think this is probably not a bad idea, if we're looking at Mississauga." You know what they're prepared to do? They're prepared to sacrifice a very courageous member from Brampton Centre. They're prepared to throw her to the dogs and say, "You know what? We're going to give up your seat, but we're going to make sure we do what we think is the political thing to win seats in Mississauga."

**Ms. Horwath:** I was in my office listening to the comments of my colleague the member from Timmins—James Bay, and I have to say that he did a really good job of outlining the issues that are before us in regard to this bill. It's an issue of fundamental democracy, and I think he described that very well when he talked about the structural issues in the restructuring of this particular region.

It was interesting that he raised the whole issue of who's afraid of whom in this process. It reminded me of a famous movie. I think Liz Taylor was the actress who played Virginia Wolf. So "Who's afraid of Hazel McCallion?" is the issue right now. It seems to me that my colleague from Timmins—James Bay was saying that the government is afraid of Hazel McCallion. I think Hazel will be happy to be likened to Liz Taylor in terms of her role in this particular situation.

He also talked about—and I think it was really important—how the process has failed the people of Peel region, or at least a large group of people in Peel region. I think it's fair to say that not only has this failure been in the process and the result of that in regard to what has come so far in this particular bill, but also in terms of the legislative process in the future. It's my understanding that it's not going to be travelling to the communities that are here tonight, but the debate on this bill will be restricted to public meetings in this very location.

The other issue he raised that I thought was really important was not only who is speaking up on behalf of these communities but also how they are speaking up. Everyone has great regard for Ms. Jeffrey on the issue, but the reality is, a five-minute debate on a bill that is so significantly catastrophic for the region of Peel is a serious issue and deserves much more debate from those members—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I find myself encouraged to participate in this debate, because I've been listening carefully to honourable members saying awfully outrageous things about a very important democratic principle. The reality is, with the bill that we bring forward, there's an adjustment made which gives the ultimate respect for all of the citizens of Peel region because it's based on the principles of rep by pop.

I strongly support the strong views brought forward—  
*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd ask the House to come to order.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: If the member speaking could address the inequities in the province of Ontario, I'd be prepared to listen.

**The Acting Speaker:** I don't hear a point of order. I will give the Minister of Health time to conclude his comment.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** A helpful intervention from the honourable member best known for shooting his finger at the people of the province of Ontario on the front page of the Toronto Star.

The honourable member from a rural riding wanted to intervene and make the point that our government is committed to making sure that there remains significant representation in northern Ontario, because the size of those communities presents a challenge. There's a strong differential built in already between urban and rural settings but, on the fundamental issue, the numbers have been put forward already, and I find it incredulous that the honourable member who started this discussion would seek to create some similarity between an issue which seeks to adjust the proportion and representation on a council with what that previous government did—  
*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I already answered that, but you were too busy heckling elsewhere. Instead—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the House to come to order once more.

**Mr. Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent to give my friend Mr. Smitherman an extra 30 seconds.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member has asked for unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent? I heard a no.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I do want to say that the honourable members so willing to give additional time might have just allowed me to have two minutes unfettered to make my points. The point is very simple, but it won't be simple enough for the honourable member from the rump back there. The principle is simple. It is that the people of Peel region, whether they be from Caledon, Brampton or Mississauga, have the right to equal representation. That's what this bill does, and that's why I support it so strenuously.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time for questions and comments. The member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Bisson:** I think it's rather unfortunate that the government didn't allow the unanimous consent motion to move forward to give an extra 30 seconds. My poor friend Mr. Smitherman had to speak on a dead mike for 30 seconds. It was kind of funny to watch.

Listen, to my good friends the Minister of Health and the member from Mississauga West, I've just got to say, in all respect, you're arguing and saying, "Well, this is all about rep by pop." That's what Judge Adams recommended, if I read the legislation well. Judge Adams said,



"I want to give rep by pop to the area of Peel." Is this what the government did in the legislation? No. So I say to myself, don't come into the House and all of a sudden pretend it is what it is not, because it is very clear what we've got, and it's not rep by pop.

The issue is, if you look at the population growth within the city of Brampton and the city of Mississauga, it's clear that the increase in Brampton is three times what it is in Mississauga. It's not to say that we should be unfair to Mississauga or to Brampton or vice versa; the issue is we have to have a formula that basically says, at the end of the day, if there's a change in population that says more people move into Brampton, then there's got to be an increase on the regional council of Peel for the people of Brampton. That's what this should be all about, and that's not what the government is doing.

I just think it's rather sad. The reality is, I sat in this House in opposition with honourable members who are now in cabinet who argued with me in opposition that we have to have respect for the local citizens when it comes to decisions made about how their municipal councils operate. That's not what this bill does.

To my good friend the member from Hamilton—

**Ms. Horwath:** East.

**Mr. Bisson:** East. I always get ridings wrong. I should never be a Deputy Speaker. Listen, it's hard. We have many members in my caucus, and I get lost with all of them.

Anyway, she makes a good point. Who is afraid of Hazel McCallion at the end of the day? I believe it is the government.

2020

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Tascona:** I'm very pleased to speak on this bill. I notice the government didn't put up a speaker for this. But I'm pleased to continue the debate because it's important that this debate be continued.

There's been a lot of talk tonight, but I want to deal with the facts. Before I deal with the facts, I want to thank the Minister of Health for coming up to my riding on Friday. We were dealing with the family health units, which are very important to my riding. I can tell you that it's important in my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford that we get the health care that we need. We've also added an MRI at Royal Victoria Hospital. I not only represent that area, I also represent the area that covers Southlake Regional Health Centre, which is down by Bradford and Innisfil. I can tell you that whole corridor is very important in terms of the health care that we need. The services that have been provided over the last eight years have been very significant, and we're looking for more services coming up into that area, in particular the cancer care centre.

I just want to say that I'm having a pancake breakfast on Saturday, raising money for the cancer care centre and also Hospice Simcoe. I've been doing this for nine years, and it's very important that we bring attention to that issue.

I want to now deal with Bill 186. This bill was the result of a report that was issued through a government-appointed facilitator. That's what the problem is here. Why does this government keep doing these reports? I'm the critic for the Attorney General. The Attorney General got a report commissioned with respect to paralegals by the law society. That report is gathering dust as we deal with an issue that should be dealt with—the paralegal situation in this province, which I've brought up on a number of occasions. Also the Sharia law report that was commissioned from Marion Boyd, the former Attorney General, is another one gathering dust. We have a report that was issued the other day by LeSage, a respected jurist, with respect to civilian oversight. I suspect that one is going to gather dust too. What's going to happen? Are they going to follow the advice?

What we have here is another respected jurist, George Adams, who was asked to deal with the region of Peel. The Minister of Health is dealing with a point about representation by population. I don't view it that way. Because of the fact that they have reconfigured the representation in an area where the Liberals said they would never tread, what I think we have here is, in effect, annexation. The city of Mississauga is going to be able to annex—they've taken over. They have basically taken over how things are going to be run in the region of Peel. That's not representation by population; it's pure annexation.

We know a little bit about annexation in the county of Simcoe, I can tell you, because we've had a number of those situations happen, whether it's a territorial grab or whether it's just a grab of power. What we have here is a grab of power by one municipality at the expense of two others. They have the power. The exercise is basically an annexation, because the government has given this group the power that they wanted. They really want out territorially, but since the government wouldn't go that far yet—I believe they will; I think they will go territorially far enough to make sure that Mississauga is out because they've basically got one foot out right now—they have given them the power that they need to control their own affairs. That's what they've been whining about. They wanted out, they didn't want to be part of the region, but now they've got the voting power that they need.

You call it as you wish. I view this more as an annexation of Mississauga being able to control the affairs of the region of Peel, without the region of Peel being blown up. They wanted it blown up, but since they couldn't get it blown up, they got the voting power.

This is a serious issue. I'm going to go through this very clearly, because I have spoken a great length with our critic, Tim Hudak, on this issue. Over the past year, Premier McGuinty and his Minister of Municipal Affairs have adopted several different positions on the restructuring of Peel region. Here's the timeline on the shifting position of the McGuinty Liberal government.

First of all, January 2004: Premier McGuinty states Peel restructuring is not on their agenda. June 2004: Finance Minister Greg Sorbara confirms that the govern-

ment has no intention of moving forward with restructuring. Also in June 2004: Premier McGuinty states that his government will not be any making restructuring changes in Peel. August 2004: Minister Gerretsen states Peel restructuring must be based on consensus. October 2004: Minister Gerretsen hires Justice George Adams to mediate a resolution to Peel restructuring. December 2004: Justice Adams delivers a report recommending two more Mississauga regional councillors and five more from Brampton. February 2005: Premier McGuinty promises to abide by Justice Adams's report. April 2005: Minister Gerretsen announces his decision to ignore the Adams report and appoint two Mississauga regional councillors and one from Brampton.

The critic for municipal affairs has questioned where the other members from Brampton stand on this issue. We have other members besides the member from Brampton Centre. We have the member from Brampton West—Mississauga and the other member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale. I haven't anything from them.

We heard tonight from the member for Brampton Centre that she's going to vote against this bill. She has the right to vote against it. What is that going to do in terms of dealing with an issue where she was elected to a Liberal government that basically said they were not going to deal with any restructuring in the municipal sector? They criticized our government soundly for any kind of restructuring, yet they get involved in the most fundamental type of restructuring: restructuring the power base within a region. They don't want to take the bold step, which they've been asked to do by the mayor of Mississauga, "Take us out of the region." She has been very clear on that. She wants out of the region of Peel, but they weren't prepared to do that—yet. What they are prepared to do is change the voting structure within the region of Peel to give the city of Mississauga what they want in terms of controlling their own affairs. That's why we're here today, because we are dealing with Bill 186, which will deal with that.

I've got two letters I want to refer to. The first one is dated April 26, 2005. It's written by the mayor of the town of Caledon, Marolyn Morrison, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, John Gerretsen. It reads this way:

"I would like to take this opportunity to advise you in a clear, concise manner that I do not support the approval of Bill 186 as it is currently drafted.

"I had previously asked to have the opportunity to review the content of the bill prior to its introduction. This was done by way of correspondence, dated April 12. In that letter I had indicated that the city of Brampton had made a very compelling argument that their representation should increase as their population grows. Justice Adams had recommended a form of weighted voting and despite comments made to the contrary this approach exists in a number of two-tier governments in Ontario. Minister, this bill has a number of serious flaws, not the

least of which is an unclear process for the election of the chair.

"I would respectfully request that this current bill not be approved in such a hasty fashion and that standing committee hearings be held.

"I trust that this clarifies my position on the bill, and I look forward to hearing from you with the dates, times and locations of the standing committee hearings."

That's from the mayor of the town of Caledon.

## 2030

There are other ways the government could have dealt with this issue. You don't have to go into a bill and not consult with people before you get into the bill. They could have issued—well, they did a report. It's obvious they weren't going to follow the report, because they didn't, yet they said they would. But what we have here is a situation where they could have put out a white paper and said, "OK, here's what we've got planned. We're not going to follow Justice Adams's report. We'll do a white paper, so we'll have a good discussion on this and try to get a consensus before we introduce a bill." But they didn't choose to do that, because the pressure that's being put on them obviously is sufficient for them to introduce a bill.

I've got another letter dated April 26, 2005. This is from the mayor of Brampton, Susan Fennell. It's to the Honourable John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It reads as follows:

"Dear Mr. Minister,

"As you know, Mayor Marolyn Morrison and I with respective councillors attended the Legislature last evening for the second reading of your government's restructuring legislation, Bill 186, the Region of Peel Act, 2005." That would have been last night, April 25.

"I want to reiterate, Mr. Minister, that this legislation is, in the opinion of the council of the city of Brampton, unacceptable, fundamentally flawed and must not be enacted by your government.

"While you allude to your government's comprehensive public consultation process in your introductory remarks, I want to remind you that the elected representatives of Peel regional council have never once debated the matter of governance in public. The consultation process you referred to has been non-existent.

"Your government must hold full and open public hearings on this matter in both Brampton and Caledon. Moreover, our citizens must be afforded the courtesy of proper and adequate public notice of these hearings.

"I look forward to your government's recognition of the interests and views of the citizens of Brampton and Caledon."

We're here tonight debating Bill 186, and the Liberal government has put up two speakers: one for five minutes from Brampton Centre and the other one for five minutes, I believe was the member from Mississauga West. They've used 25% of their allocated time to debate this bill tonight. What we heard from the member from Brampton Centre was that she was not going to vote for this bill, yet she supports what her government has done



and believes in her own heart that the government has done good things for Brampton. God bless her. That's the opinion she's got.

The member from Mississauga West is a little bit more cavalier about it, because he knows he's basically got what he needs and he really has no pressure on him. Well, he does have some pressure, because if they don't go along with the mayor of Mississauga, it's reported in the papers that she's going to make sure they get turfed. So they're basically following the party line and the mayor's line.

What have we heard here tonight? I don't think we've heard anything. With respect, we haven't heard from the minister. We can't say under the rules whether someone is here or not, but the fact of the matter is that we haven't heard from him. So we don't know how the Liberals are going to respond to these two mayors about these issues. We don't know what they're going to do on public hearings, but we do know that they're not supportive of this legislation as it's drafted presently. So we don't know what the Liberals are thinking. Quite frankly, I don't believe they're going to change anything in this bill. They've gone this far out on the hook; I think it's a little bit dangerous for them to start treading water and reeling back from where they are, because I don't believe that's where they're going.

What we have here is a situation where you've really got to question and you've really got to feel for the three members from Brampton, because they probably didn't understand what they got into when they got into provincial politics. They're going to have to follow the party line one way or the other, and for them to say, "We're going to vote against this bill," and whatever, what good is that going to do for their region? It's their government that is bringing forth this legislation. It's their government that is fundamentally going to change the power structure within the region of Peel. They've got to wear it. Now, how they choose to wear it is up to them. They can speak out. They can basically decide, "I'm not going to be part of this government any more; I want to be an independent," or they may want to resign. It depends on what principles they feel they should follow. We've seen that in our own government, in terms of issues of regional municipalities and mergers and that. Certain members take certain positions and sometimes they decide to leave provincial politics because they feel strongly enough about that issue. We will have to see how this one plays out.

I'll tell you, if my government tried to put the city of Barrie back into the county of Simcoe, that would not be happening at all, because that's something that I never ran on. I doubt very much that any of these people ran on the issue. Their government came out clear: "We're not getting involved in municipal politics." What are they doing here? They're totally involved in municipal politics, interfering with the process. They're not even allowing the councillors to get involved in the debate, to give them a consensus, because they decided that the report that they asked for didn't meet their needs. So they've misled

the people they were trying to work with. Unlike the reports that I'm dealing with as the Attorney General critic, which are gathering dust, the Adams report didn't just gather dust, it wasn't followed.

We've got a fundamental issue here, because the people of the region of Peel—and I know that area pretty well. I used to practise law in Mississauga and in Brampton with Neil Davis and the firm that I was with there in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I can tell you that it's a great area, but the fact of the matter is, the area has to work together because it's so large and growing. The services they need and the commercial tax base they need to make it work together was thought through, and this fundamental change that they're talking about here is not wanted, other than the fact that it's what Mississauga really wants, or at least it's what their council would appear to want. They want out. This is one way for them to get out.

I think what the Liberals are going to do, if they really feel the heat and they feel they've got to protect the seats in Brampton, is they may say to the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon, "You set up your own structure and we'll let Mississauga out, because you feel that you don't want to work under the system that we're about to put in." The proof will be in the pudding. The fact of the matter is, as the member from Beaches—East York said tonight, how do you deal with a deadlock?

The other point raised by one of the mayors is, how are you going to deal with the election of the chair? The chair is going to be the key position; there is no doubt about it. The fact of the matter is, if the votes go the way they should go, of course the chair is going to be from Mississauga. There is no doubt that the chair is going to be from Mississauga. So it'll sort of work the way the old Metro council used to work, where the representative invariably was from Toronto. Toronto dictated how Metro council would run, and that's the same way it's going to be here: Mississauga will dictate how the region of Peel will run.

The people from Brampton and the people from Caledon are really not going to know, until this really gets evolving, how they're going to be affected. But we do know, from a basic principle, that this is not representation by population. Let's not get carried away in terms of what this government stands for. The critic for democratic renewal has stated very clearly that they're not following rep by pop with respect to northern Ontario when you look at how they are dealing with southern Ontario. It's not representation by population.

What we're dealing with here is a fundamental decision to leave the three members from Brampton out in the cold, having to deal with the basics of how they represent their area. It's not going to be easy because the fact of the matter is this will fundamentally change how the region of Peel will operate.

Of course, the people and the representatives from Brampton and Caledon are here tonight, and they were here last night, because they want some answers. They want to be responded to in terms of what's going to be

done with the issue, but they're not getting any answers. All they're hearing is silence, because the Liberal government is not bringing any speakers, and they're not going to hear from the minister. We don't know what the minister is going to say on this. He spoke last night, but we haven't heard from him today. The letters were drafted today because they were looking for answers. They're not getting any answers out of this debate, because there are no answers to be provided. The decision has been made. There's going to be a fundamental change in the region of Peel. It's short of annexation because they didn't really want to annex anybody; they just wanted to control their own destiny. Now Mississauga can control its own destiny. Even though it's not a territorial separation, it's certainly a separation in the voting structure within the region of Peel, which obviously they are satisfied with at this juncture.

2040

#### **The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Horwath:** It's my pleasure to make some comments on the debate by the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. I think he did a very adequate job in his initial remarks, talking about the history of this particular issue in regard to what has been happening with the situation in Peel region. He talked quite eloquently about the matter of who will speak up on behalf of the voices that to this point have not received the kind of attention they need to receive in order to get justice for the majority of the people, at least the majority in terms of who is being represented this evening in the chamber.

It's really important to recognize that it's not just a matter of who will stand up and vote against this bill; it's a matter of who will take the time to get up and debate in the House and do the real things that need to be done to motivate a change in the way that the government is thinking about Bill 186. I think that's what is expected of the members who represent this area. I certainly hope, on behalf of the people visiting us in the gallery tonight, that they are going to see some of that representation.

Up until now, we've seen that the government members have already given up one of their opportunities to speak to the bill, which tells a story about their willingness to defend the position they've taken. Why? Because as the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford mentioned very clearly in his remarks, this bill has ended up in a situation where it has caved in to the interests of one group.

I'm looking forward to speaking to this bill myself, because it's quite clear that there had been a consensus built, and there had been a trust built in the process that this government actually initiated, only now, at the end of the day, to have a bill tabled in this Legislature that throws out that trust, that throws out that process and that says, "No, we are going to suddenly give more attention to one voice in the process." That is totally inappropriate.

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** I'm proud of the region of Peel and the city of Mississauga, as well as the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon. These three areas have grown from small hamlets like the one

that resides in my riding, Cooksville. There is also Streetsville, and a number of other little hamlets that grew into, actually, the third largest city in Ontario, after Ottawa and Toronto.

The region of Peel has also done some marvellous things. It won the National Quality Institute award. It has helped to run the region very efficiently. Just last week we had a chance, through the region and Peel housing, to be able to announce 136 new units of affordable housing in the riding of Mississauga East. That was a great announcement, done through the region.

I'm very happy to see Mayor Morrison and Mayor Fennell. Also, I know that Mayor McCallion is out of the country and was not able to be here tonight.

In regard to Judge Adams's recommendations and moving forward with an evolution, we did implement, and this piece of legislation will be implementing, seven of the eight different points that Judge Adams brought forward.

The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford likes to play divisive politics with all of this, but that dinosaur caucus over there wants to live in the past and doesn't want to move forward. Well, do you know what? This party is about moving forward; it's about listening to the people and making sure that their voices are heard. We want to make sure that all voices are heard in the region of Peel—they are being heard—in a very fair and balanced way, something that that previous government failed to do.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** It is amazing to hear a member from Mississauga talk about the history of the region of Peel. As I understand the history of the region of Peel, they have brought forward very, very progressive governments for the region of Peel over the last 30 years on the basis that Mississauga didn't have the hammer in regional council. So the present government goes out to a facilitator or a mediator and they ask Judge Adams to bring forward a report, and the report recommends that Mississauga gets 12 regional councillors, that Brampton gets 10 over a period of time, and Caledon retains their five. What we get in response from the government is very biased and a twist of what Adams recommended. They didn't accept what Adams said at all. They say they accepted seven of eight recommendations, but the most important recommendation is the eighth recommendation or the ninth recommendation or whatever it is.

This government is about a piece of legislation which is going to provide divisive politics to the region of Peel over the next 10 or 15 years. They've coalesced the forces so that the city of Brampton and Caledon are going to be teamed up against Mississauga. Up to now, they have been able to broker this out for the best of all of the region. Now it's not the case.

All I ask is that this government refer the matter to the region of Peel so that the local councillors and the mayor and the local people have a say. Give them their say before you pass this piece of legislation.



**The Acting Speaker:** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Bisson:** On the heels of that, I agree with the dean of the House: It is all about giving the people of the area their say. It's pretty clear. The judge came out with his recommendations. The judge basically said that we need to continue down the road of making sure that we give representation by population when it comes to the composition of the regional council of Peel.

This government, for whatever reason, jumped offside and decided to do their own thing. They just said, "We're not going to listen to the judge in regard to his particular"—not Judge Gomery, by the way; that is a whole other debate that my friend from Ottawa raised, but that's another issue.

Listen, in the commission report, Judge Adams said that we should go down the road of making sure that in the future there is a mechanism to ensure that as Brampton's population increases, there is an increase on the council for the city of Brampton. If you take a look at the population demographics, it's clear. There is almost a 3-to-1 increase in population for Brampton as opposed to what we see in the city of Mississauga. The simple issue is that we need to make sure that we have representation by population.

Now, if the people in the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon were happy with what was going on, would they be sitting here for the last couple of nights? I say to the government members, it's really simple. The majority of the people of the area are upset. They've been having community meetings. They're saying that they want this government to do what is right. The government is not doing so, and we say to ourselves, why not listen to the people? What's wrong in a democracy with listening to what the people have to say? I just say to them: take your time; relax; think about what is going on here; get this debate done at second reading; move the bill off to committee during the intersession; allow in the intersession for public hearings in the communities of Brampton and others; allow the people to have their say, then let's come back here in the fall with committee of the whole and a vote at third reading in order to decide what we should do.

**The Acting Speaker:** That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I return to the member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford. You have two minutes to sum up.

2050

**Mr. Tascona:** The fundamental issue here—and everybody knows it—is Mississauga is built out. They are not going to be growing any more; they have built out. This principle of rep by pop doesn't work, because the city of Brampton is the one that is growing.

So when the member from Lanark—Carleton talks about divisive politics over the next 10 to 15 years and about looking at the situation in terms of giving people their say on this issue, this is a fundamental issue that is going to change the region of Peel and the fundamental dynamics of this particular area, which needs to work

together. It has to work together because it's such a large and powerful area of this province. So they need to work together for their services.

So when the government brings out their policy in terms of essentially being against urban growth and Places to Grow, and yet they bring in a policy here in the region of Peel that is counterintuitive and counter to the way this region has been operating, it doesn't make any sense. Because when you've got a community that is built out—and that's the reason why Mayor Hazel McCallion wants out, because she knows that their power within the region is going to decrease. She's taking her chance right now. She knows the time to get out is now, and she's got her way, because the timing was right for her.

This is not good for Caledon and it's not good for Brampton, because it doesn't make any sense to them. They're the growth areas. So what we have here is a government that is not listening. They say that I'm living in the past; they don't even know what the future is, because all they are doing is making this area dysfunctional. It's not going to work and it's divisive.

I agree with the member from Lanark—Carleton: Bring it back to the people and let them make the decision, because they had a consensus before.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms. Horwath:** A lot of people in tonight's discussion about Bill 186 have referred to Judge Adams and his report. I thought it would be important, in the initial part of my discussion and concerns about this bill tonight, to quote directly from the preamble of his report. I think it clearly indicates the feeling that the people of Caledon and Brampton, and certainly their elected representatives, must be having at this point in time, and that's a feeling of a complete breach of good faith and a complete breach of trust by this government. Unfortunately, this government doesn't have much currency when it comes to issues of good faith and building trust.

However, I thought it would be important to reflect on this particular paragraph because it really does set out what I think were the expectations that were built by this government when they appointed Judge Adams in this process. I'm going to read directly from his report. It says:

"I am pleased to report that the parties participated in intensive problem-solving talks over the course of four days. There was a thorough airing of concerns which revealed both significant differences and common interests. While at the outset of these talks, the differences appeared to be overwhelming the common interests, the good faith discussion which followed allows me to report that a substantial consensus may be forged around the ideas set out below."

It goes on to say that of course it's the responsibility of the minister to then follow up and make sure that this good faith, this trust, this excellent relationship and airing of concerns and hammering out of a consensus be followed up by the government. But unfortunately we see in Bill 186 that no such faith has been followed through on,

no such pact has been honoured by this government. I believe that is why we have seen for the last two nights a number of elected officials and a number of people from the communities of Brampton and Caledon coming forward, so that at least during the debate we're forced to look into their faces and speak to them, as the people who are most interested in this issue.

What is this issue, you might ask? I have a couple of things I wanted to say in terms of what I see as the main issues tied up in this particular bill. An idea has been mentioned many times by members of the opposition and, in fact, by the member from—I can't remember her riding—Brampton, who spoke about the lack of fairness in this particular bill. That is, the bill sets up a situation where it will likely be the case, in more instances than not, that when there is friction at the upper tier in Peel region between the parties, in this model the government is bringing forward, contrary to what was recommended by the good justice, Mississauga will win the day. That issue has been clearly indicated by all the speakers who are concerned about this bill.

It's also really clear to recognize that this is the thin edge of the wedge when it comes to what Mississauga wants. We all know that initially the desire of Mayor McCallion was to separate completely from the region of Peel. When that failed, she then decided it was an opportune time to take advantage of a weak Premier and a weak government to change the way the playing field was organized to her own benefit and the benefit of one of the three municipalities that are part of Peel region. That is one of the most problematic pieces of this legislation.

The fastest-growing, most quickly expanding area of this region, the area of Brampton, is getting short shrift when you look at the way this bill reflects—actually, doesn't reflect—the discussions that took place; the intensive, faith-based discussions. I don't mean "faith-based" in the way we talk about faith and our religious beliefs, but faith in terms of the trust that was supposed to have been built in this process. I can tell you that not only Brampton but Caledon as well are very, very concerned about the way the government has decided to go forward on Bill 186.

A troubling aspect of the government's restructuring of Peel region is that the Premier has specifically told the mayor of Brampton, Susan Fennell, that his "government did not run on municipal restructuring and we are not interested in restructuring." This could be a broken promise. They promised they weren't interested in this, but then, lo and behold, when lots of other issues people are concerned about across this province have not been dealt with, up pops this issue. Bill 186 is all of a sudden not only at the top of the agenda but getting pushed forward by a government whose members will not even get up to speak to the bill, let alone those who are most intimately affected by this bill. A couple of them got up to speak. All kudos to the member from Brampton, who was very blunt in her criticism of the bill and the process. Nonetheless, I don't think it was enough of a protest to

really resonate in terms of what the group of people who are here need to hear from their representative at the provincial level.

It's another example of the Premier promising one thing during an election campaign, promising that amalgamation and all those processes that caused so much angst and anxiety and trouble across the province from the previous government—my municipality was also one that was amalgamated, and I can talk about that a little later on. These people, these municipalities, were promised by the government that that's not something they wanted to get into, not something they were worried about, not something they were going to be bothering with at this point in time. Well, they sure started to bother with it in short order, and I can tell you that the people in the gallery tonight are bothered by it too.

They are bothered by it because the process that was put in place, which was based on a good-faith relationship between the people participating and the facilitator chosen by this government and the terms of reference that were set out by this government, was not adhered to. At the end of the day, this government decided to cherry-pick the recommendations. And guess what? That is the same trouble those guys got into when they were in government and decided to cherry-pick recommendations of the Who Does What committee. Again, I can talk about that a little bit later on. That's what happened, and we ended up with the massive downloading that is causing huge problems across this province to this very day, which the current government can't even address because it's such a nightmare and such a fiscal disaster for municipalities across the province.

## 2100

Instead of dealing with the compromise that was delivered under the expertise of a facilitator, a former judge, George Adams, the McGuinty government decided to play politics and reward Mississauga by caving in to the demands of Mayor McCallion. Why? Because she helped them to deliver all the seats they now have in the Mississauga area. That is the pure politics of Bill 186. I'll call it what it is. It is the pure politics of why these members will not get up and defend this bill, because God forbid that somebody from these other areas tunes in and hears that they have something to say about this nasty piece of legislation. Lord knows, as members of the opposition have said quite clearly, they're not going to be picking up seats in Brampton or Caledon any time soon and certainly they're going to feel the sting of this legislation in the next provincial election if it happens to pass in its current form.

That's another issue. Will it pass in its current form? It seems to me that the likelihood is that this government is not interested in even debating it at second reading, never mind taking it into the communities where they can actually hear from the people whom they have largely ignored to this point in time. They are not going to take this bill and have public hearings on it. They're not going to go face the people and answer their questions. They are not going to go to Caledon. They're not going to



drive down that long highway and get to Caledon and get to Brampton and talk to the people who are going to be affected by this legislation. Of course they're not. They won't even get their members to speak on the legislation here in the House. No, they're not going to do that. Are they going to come back here and maybe pull some people into this building and have some public hearings here? Maybe.

But at the end of the day, are they going to change the legislation? Absolutely not. How do we know? Because all they could muster was a little five-minute giveaway to the one member on their side who has had the guts to get up and speak against this bill. If we knew they were interested at all in any amendments or any kind of compromise around this bill, then we would hear more voices from that side of the House talking about how there might be some compromise available, but we know that is not happening. They won't even put up members to speak to the bill. So we know this bill is not going to change and in fact is going to get railroaded through. Mark my words.

These mayors and these people from Brampton and Caledon here tonight are going to be sadly disappointed, because they think that by coming here, you people are actually going to listen to them. Goodness knows, we on this side of the House have recognized very clearly that that never happens. Even if you have the most appropriate and meaningful suggestions that would improve legislation brought forward by this government, they don't take it into consideration. In their arrogance, they ignore it and plow forward, and that is a sad, sad state of government.

I was talking a little bit about the member who spoke against this bill. When there are issues specifically relative in a geographical way to the riding or the area that a member represents, I think it's important that that member be given the opportunity to speak to those issues. The member from Brampton Centre certainly did get up and speak. Unfortunately, she was only carved out a short five-minute time to raise all the issues and concerns that this legislation represents for her community.

I thought I would take the opportunity to read into the record a piece of correspondence that we received. It was submitted to us and we were asked to read it, and I shall. It is dated April 25, 2005, addressed to Mr. Kular. It says:

"I read with some interest the notice you posted in the 'Coming Events' of the Brampton Guardian, notifying your constituents of the upcoming town hall meeting. There are two items in particular that struck me as being funny." As an aside, I think she means "funny" in a sarcastic way.

"First, by my calculations, you are approximately one month late. You or a designate should have represented the Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale area back on March 22 when the city of Brampton had their town hall meeting to discuss the governance issue, the very topic you are allegedly wanting to discuss on Wednesday, April 27, 2005. Bill 186, the Regional Municipality of Peel Act, 2005, was introduced on Wednesday, April 13,

with a second reading which was to be held" on "Monday, April 25." As you know, this very evening we are debating this bill. "I fail to see how a governance meeting after the fact will benefit the region of Peel and its citizens. The third and final reading will be close behind, and I honestly don't think any last-ditch attempt by you will derail this legislation, unless it comes from the minister himself. The last time I checked, and correct me if I'm wrong, you represent the people of this BGMS area, and since it is your first term in office, I would have thought you would have made every effort to make an appearance to support your constituents on a topic that is very vital to our community."

That's the first part of this woman's complaint, by the way. This complaint, written to Mr. Kular about the timing and his lack of representation on this issue, which is extremely important in his riding, came from a woman named Christina MacLean, and it was copied to a number of other elected officials in the area. It really does reflect a lot of the comments that have been made this evening, and that is, where is the representation from the members of provincial Parliament who are elected to hear from, to speak for and to represent the interests of their ridings in this Legislature? It's obvious that they're nowhere in sight, and this letter reflects it.

"The second thing I found funny," says Christina MacLean, "was the starting time of the meeting. It's a town hall meeting...."

She goes on to describe how the member was so insensitive about the realities of working life and the second part of the day of labour for women particularly, who go to work and then come home and have to take care of their family and get supper ready and all of that. This member actually put the meeting together for 5:30. This woman is saying that anybody who works and has a family knows you can't get to a meeting by 5:30. At the very earliest, at the very stretch of it, 7 is the earliest anybody can get to a meeting. So not only was this member questioned by his constituent about the timing of the meeting in that he decided to have it a month after all the debate and discussion of this issue, but it was also at a time of day when most constituents would not be able to show up. It really reflects the lack of backbone of the members of this government in regard to defending their actions, particularly in terms of what's going to happen to Brampton and Caledon in the context of Bill 186. People are simply not happy with this legislation, because it doesn't reflect the good-faith process they thought they were getting into when they met with Justice Adams.

There are lots of bad things about this bill, but I thought I should take some time to talk about the other piece of restructuring that is affecting municipalities. I thought I would speak to that, because in fact the good judge speaks about it as well in his report. He speaks about the fact that much of the tension and anxiety and concern entwined with this whole discussion about governance in this region is about the situation of downloading and what it has done to single-tier and

double-tier municipalities. I can tell you, from my own experience, that was a big, huge mistake.

It was a big, huge mistake on several levels, but probably the biggest mistake was that when the previous government set out to do the downloading exercise—and I know this because my own regional chair at the time, regional chairman Terry Cooke, was involved in the Who Does What panel. They undertook a significant examination of who was paying for what at which level, with the whole idea that it was a single taxpayer—at least that's how the bill of goods was sold. At the end of the day, we were all sold another bill of goods which said the entire exercise was going to be revenue-neutral. People may recall that Mr. Cooke, when he came back to Hamilton, discovered that the government of the day—here's the instructive part—decided to cherry-pick the recommendations, as opposed to holus-bolus implement the recommendations of that panel. So what happened? The balance was lost, the discussion was lost, the entire process of culling out who does what and why and for how much was totally destroyed, because the government cherry-picked.

Here we are, a couple of years later, and municipalities are being devastated by downloading to this very day. My municipality, the municipality of Hamilton, at this point is still suffering a minimum \$19-million problem. In fact, if I recall correctly, at the beginning of the downloading process it was closer to \$37 million. After a year or two, with CRF funding and various other things we were able to do, it went down to about \$32 million. At the last check I had, it was at about \$26 million. This is the difference between what was supposed to be revenue-neutral and what in actual fact my city of Hamilton had to absorb in the downloading process.

2110

You know very well that Hamilton keeps coming back to this government now saying, "Fix the mistake. Make our funding work. Invest in cities like you said you were going to. Deal with the problems that the previous government foisted upon us in their wrong-headed downloading process." Alas, we know that this government, instead of dealing with those important issues, is turning around and making the same mistakes that the government before them made in terms of cherry-picking recommendations after going through a great deal of process, a great deal of trust-building, a great deal of commitment that was supposed to have been made and that I think everyone was signing on to when these venerable people showed up to these meetings.

Her Worship Hazel McCallion, Her Worship Mayor Marolyn Morrison, Her Worship Mayor Susan Fennell and Chair Emil Kolb all went into the meetings thinking they were hammering out the deal. They were pushing and pulling and they were compromising. They were, very productively and proactively, trying to hammer out their future in a way that respected the things that were different about them, that understood the things that were going to happen to them all in the future, because they took into consideration time frames of a couple of years

from now and then a couple of years after that. And what did this government do? This government basically said, "We don't care. We're going to do what one player wants to do," and that's what Hazel wants to do. It's all about Hazel.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Jeffrey:** I wanted to compliment the homework that the opposition has done on this bill. Bill 186 is near and dear to my heart in that I have spoken about this possible legislation for the last year. I want to thank the staying power of my council. I know they've sat through many council meetings that were long and protracted. Tonight is like many of those meetings, although not as productive, I'm sure, because there is no motion at the end of it that makes you feel you have the end in sight.

I would like to remind people what Justice Adams said in his report. He reminded us that Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga "are not endlessly robust, nor is their Peel relationship. These ... municipalities need support from the province." He talked about the discussion over the four days of talks. He said they were "heated and even gut-wrenching at times," but that the individuals who participated "exhibited a remarkable capacity by the mayors to work together." He spoke about "The amazing achievements of Peel and Mississauga for example, over the last 30 years," and he wanted to "confirm the viability of the existing model provided it is kept current." He spoke about the fact that Brampton and Caledon have worked very hard with Mississauga to help it be a viable institution, how it needs to grow and needs to change. That's clear. But I don't think this legislation does that. I don't think it addresses those needs.

This justice clearly spent a considerable amount of time looking at the legislation. I'm really pleased that the opposition has taken the time to try to understand it and learn it and challenge us. We can make this legislation better. We have the opportunity, and we still have the time.

**Mr. Sterling:** This legislation is really not about Hazel McCallion or Susan Fennell or Marolyn Morrison; it's really about the future of a community that has learned to grow together for the past 30 years. Notwithstanding that Brampton and Caledon were in the minority in terms of population but had the majority on council, they used that majority with great wisdom. As I understand it, they never denied Mississauga any kind of regional budget item that would have halted its growth, halted its development, halted its future. As a result of that goodwill, which existed for over 30 years, that is probably what sticks in the craw of those people who have served on municipal government over that period of time and who serve on municipal government now.

When you go into municipal restructuring, it is a very difficult task for the provincial government to do. For instance, in the Ottawa area, where I was involved in terms of municipal restructuring, we had six or seven years of debate with the municipal politicians as to what they thought should be the solution. We had reports; we had advice; we had meetings; we had public meetings;



we listened. Let's give the municipal councillors and regional councillors the opportunity to have their say about the Adams report before we proceed with this legislation.

**Mr. Bisson:** My good friend the member for Hamilton East makes the point, and I think it's a good one, that downloading really started a lot of where we're at right now. Part of what this is all about is the regional council of Peel trying to find a way for them to be able to deal with some of those realities. So I think those are points well made.

The other thing is that I think she showed in this speech her experience from being on municipal council in Hamilton for a number of years. She understands what the issue is from the perspective of a councillor for the city of Hamilton, and a downtown councillor at that, but also understands basically what it is to live in a regional municipality that is larger than the one you come from, that at the end of the day you have to have mechanisms at your regional council that recognize in the longer run the amount of representation you should have on a regional council based on the population of the community you come from.

What's clear is that what Judge Adams recommended was that there should be representation by population. That's what the recommendation was. For whatever reason, the government—the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Dalton McGuinty, the Premier—decided, "We're not going to pay any attention to the recommendations that were made and we're going to come up with our own formula, whatever it might be." The other communities are standing out here and saying, "What sense does this make? Why is the government doing this? Why would they go against the whole concept of representation by population?"

We know that the population in the area of Brampton and others is growing by three to one compared to what is happening in Mississauga. You have to have some kind of mechanism over the longer term that is going to say to the community, "As your community grows and as the population increases, there will be an offset at the regional council to make sure that the representation on regional council reflects the population in your communities." If Mississauga should go in the end, so be it; it would be the same for them.

**Mr. Delaney:** I would like to return to the \$32-million gap that the city of Mississauga has with the region of Peel. This bill, by rebalancing representation on the Peel regional council, will enable some long overdue issues to receive consideration by the representatives of the three cities. In Mississauga we look forward to discussion on regional cost-sharing models. Perhaps costs will be allocated on the basis of usage.

My colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford keeps insisting that Mississauga is, to use his words, built out. Try telling that to the 20,000 people moving into the new neighbourhoods currently under construction in Churchill south. Try telling that to the people in Mississauga City Centre, where the major difference between the Burnhamthorpe and Hurontario area and Hong Kong is merely

the height of the towers. That is why Mississauga, which is already the safest city in Canada, is also one of Canada's top 100 employers. That is why 57 of Canada's Fortune 500 Canadian head offices are in Mississauga.

Mississauga is well run. That managerial competence is what any region needs and that managerial competence is part of the reason that Peel region has been as successful as it has. It's also part of the reason that Peel region can look forward to continued good management, intelligent co-operation and continued prosperity. If Brampton and Caledon point to their record of achieving consensus on Peel's regional council, I believe there is every reason to assume that 24 regional councillors of goodwill and integrity will act in the best interests of the nearly one million citizens of Peel's three great cities.

2120

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Hamilton East has two minutes to sum up.

**Ms. Horwath:** I want to start out by going back to front in terms of the comments, by saying that if the member opposite is really interested in dealing with whether it's Mississauga's \$32 million or Hamilton's \$19 million, they better get down to the business of fixing the downloading problem, because that's the real problem of what's happening to municipalities in this province from one end to the other. I want to thank the member from Mississauga West, though, for his comments, as well as the member from Timmins-James Bay, who I think mentioned the issue of downloading and reinforced the fact that that's the problem, and I certainly support that. He also talked about the fact that regional council was the place where some relationship-building and some give and take needed to take place, and I agree with that.

I think it also echoed, as a matter of fact, the member from Lanark-Carleton, who talked about community-building and the history of co-operation and working together that we seem to forget when we talk about the nitty-gritty of what has happened with Bill 186 and the expectations that were dashed for at least two out of three of the communities that participated.

Finally, the member from Brampton Centre spoke with great courage earlier on and again just now, because she also talked about—I think it was a bit of a theme, in terms of questions and comments this time around—it being about the community at the end of the day. It is about doing what's right for communities and making them stronger. If I'm not mistaken, the member from Brampton Centre said something to the effect that she was laying down the gauntlet and asking her government to change a bill that is bad.

I think she said, if I'm not mistaken, that they have the time and the opportunity to do what's right for the communities, to take the time to do something that will build on the strengths that historically these communities bring to their collective relationship. The member from Brampton Centre was challenging her government to do the right thing by these communities, and I only hope they do so.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Fonseca:** What I have to say follows on the lines of my colleague the member for Mississauga West in talking about the great things Mississauga has done, growing into the third-largest city here in Ontario. Mississauga is a city that is well managed, well run and crime-free; it is the number one crime-free city for its size in all of Canada.

**Interjection:** Who's the mayor?

**Mr. Fonseca:** The mayor is the great Mayor McCallion, who celebrated her 25th anniversary as mayor of Mississauga last year.

All this has also brought about a great accountability to the region. The region is one, as I was saying, that has looked for efficiencies, but as time goes by, with Mississauga growing from hamlets into a large city, and the same thing happening with Brampton—and we have the town of Caledon—there comes a point where you get to economies of scale, and you have to ask yourself, “What economies of scale are best as you try to find those efficiencies, so that every precious taxpayer dollar can be put into the services that are most needed in the two cities and the town?”

I know the mayor will often bring up regional roads that run through Mississauga. We will have Mississauga plowing out roads up to the regional road. They'll stop, cross over to the other side and continue to plow again rather than just plowing straight through and also doing that regional road and looking at those efficiencies. Why waste that extra money? The taxpayers mention all the time that they don't understand why a city the size of Mississauga, which has its own services in many areas, should not be able to do that work. It's grown to the size where it can do that.

When we look at the region, it also has brought in many high-quality standards that many other regions and municipalities have looked to. I was mentioning the National Quality Institute. They are recipients of the National Quality Institute award, which is very commendable. I think it's the only region ever to have received such an award. That award looks at best practices in government and being able to deliver best practices in education, in police services, in customer service.

One of the great things about the region of Peel is that it definitely focuses on all the people who live in Peel. It's customer-focused; everything is about the customer. When you call the region or you call one of our cities or

the town, you don't wait on hold forever. There's somebody there to answer the phone, to get you the answers you need so you can conduct your life as a private citizen and not be put on hold or be thrown into that black hole of voice mail. These are many of the efficiencies that have been brought to the region.

When we look at the city of Mississauga, in terms of population, it makes up about 63% of the region. That is about 680,000 people. I believe Brampton is hovering in the upper 300,000s and Caledon is around 50,000.

It had been a while since regional council had been looked at. As I said, the previous government wants to live in the past and the dinosaur caucus was not willing to make change. The people of Ontario voted for change, voted for fairness and voted for balance. This is what we are bringing: positive change to all parts of Ontario and making sure that we are listening to the people.

We brought in Judge George Adams to meet with the mayors and hash out a model that would help all as we move forward, something that was positive and constructive. In looking at the report, to my understanding, they'll be implementing eight of the nine recommendations. The only recommendation that was not agreed upon that they wanted to move on was that Judge Adams mentioned giving political representation to population that is not yet there. If those parties over there, the official opposition and the third party, agree, that would be like saying, “Ontario is going to grow by so many millions, so we're going to have another 20 members in here come the next election.” That is just not right, and I know the people of Ontario would not go for that. That is just completely absurd. I don't understand why they would agree with that, but they do.

They could talk to the taxpayers of Ontario and tell them they want more government. They want government that doesn't even represent people. They want government to represent imaginary people. Why don't we just throw in 25 more members here? That's what they are asking for. I know the previous government did some really absurd things, but they want to bring in phantom members. That would be the most absurd thing I've ever heard.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being precisely 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉES PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

## CONTENTS

**Tuesday 26 April 2005**

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Regional Municipality of Peel Act, 2005, Bill 186, *Mr. Gerretsen***

Mr. Duguid.....	6601, 6605
Mr. Tascona.....	6601, 6605, 6609, 6615 6619
Mr. Bisson.....	6602, 6609, 6610, 6614 6619, 6623
Mr. Bentley .....	6602
Mr. Prue .....	6602
Mrs. Jeffrey .....	6603, 6605, 6622
Mr. Delaney.....	6603, 6613, 6623
Mr. Hudak .....	6604
Ms. Horwath.....	6604, 6609, 6614 6618, 6619, 6623
Mr. Baird.....	6606, 6610
Mr. Duncan .....	6609
Mr. Yakabuski.....	6613
Mr. Smitherman .....	6614
Mr. Fonseca.....	6618, 6624
Mr. Sterling .....	6618, 6622
Debate deemed adjourned .....	6624

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Mardi 26 avril 2005**

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

#### **Loi de 2005 sur la municipalité régionale de Peel, projet de loi 186, *M. Gerretsen***

M. Bisson .....	6610
Débat présumé ajourné.....	6624





No. L136A

N° L136A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 27 April 2005**

**Mercredi 27 avril 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 April 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 avril 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN NORTH BAY

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I rise today to tell members of this House of the banner month that the residents of Nipissing have had. The month of April has been unprecedented.

Two weeks ago, on what one North Bay nurse has referred to as that "wonderful Thursday," we saw the long-awaited announcement of a \$218-million construction project which will bring at least 400 construction jobs to our riding—a huge addition to our region that will be an essential infrastructure component. This is an enormous initiative and it was a banner day.

The very next day, North Bay was privileged to be one of the 55 communities across the province chosen to develop a cutting-edge initiative to attract health care professionals to our riding.

Last Wednesday, our community was chosen as one of six pilot project sites for the JobsNow program, which will assist in a real and tangible way those who have been receiving welfare for more than 12 months.

On Friday, the Minister of Natural Resources announced support for our conservation authority, and \$330,000 for source water protection.

And just this last Monday, Minister Gerretsen visited North Bay, together with federal Minister Comuzzi, to bring more good news to our community. My federal counterpart, Anthony Rota, and I announced that the city was receiving \$15 million from each of the federal and provincial levels of government for our water filtration plant. Together with the \$4 million our government already committed to this project through the northern Ontario heritage fund, the province's investment is nearly \$20 million for this very important \$45-million project that will commence construction this fall.

The McGuinty government is building strong communities. North Bay is proud to be one of those communities, and I am proud to support the good people of North Bay.

#### TOBACCO GROWERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** Tobacco Farmers in Crisis have a plan that includes both

short-term and long-term assistance to tobacco-growing families and their communities. This plan, in my view, is much more fair and dignified than those that have been offered up by both this government and the federal government.

Why can't the members opposite see that preserving a tobacco program that controls supply, maintains minimum prices, places production permits in the hands of growers and includes health and safety protection would be in the best interests of both farmers and the general public?

Tobacco farmers, as we know, produce a legal product. They grow tobacco to supply the market, not to encourage smoking amongst adults. They are guided by strict government regulations. When this government puts Ontario's farmers out of business, who will regulate offshore tobacco? What will be the content of Canadian cigarettes? I ask the members opposite, do you realize that offshore tobacco would create a significant public health consequence for people in this province?

If the members opposite would take the time to listen to tobacco farmers, you might realize that this government does not have all the answers. These folks do share many of your goals. It's time for government to listen, to continue to listen. I do recognize farmers in the gallery today.

#### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** On April 14, Greater Sudbury city council considered the impact of the government's municipal partnership fund on our community. The fund replaces the community reinvestment fund, created by the former government when it became clear that the download of ambulances, public transit, social assistance, child care, public housing etc. was not revenue-neutral.

The new grant will be an increase of about \$500,000 over the CRF funding received in 2004. However, the funding is based on a 2002 CRF reconciliation. There is an existing shortfall between the 2002 reconciliation and what was actually budgeted by council in subsequent budgets. So in 2005, the city will actually receive about \$2.7 million less than was budgeted by council. That shortfall, now and in the future, is a cause for major concern.

This government has been silent on the matter of transitional assistance for communities that will face a funding shortfall in the out years from now until 2008. Council noted on April 14, "[T]he city will be facing

2006 grant funding in an amount less than budgeted for 2005. This is a major concern to the city as it will put increased pressure on future municipal levies and tax rates.”

City council passed a resolution calling on the McGuinty government to provide transitional funding for the years 2005-08, to phase in funding shortfalls faced by communities in those years. Our community should not have to bear the ongoing burden of costs for services which were never revenue-neutral. I call on the Minister of Finance to tell municipalities like the city of Greater Sudbury that there will be transitional funding in the out years so that the costs will truly be revenue-neutral.

### FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex):** The McGuinty government is keeping its promise to improve access to health care in Ontario. I'm pleased that approval of three family health teams for Chatham–Kent Essex has been granted. They are the Tilbury and district family health team action group, the Chatham–Kent family health team and the Leamington and area family health team.

Family health teams are the signature piece of our government's comprehensive plan to improve health care in Ontario. They are exactly what communities need to both attract and retain doctors. Doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, physiotherapists, midwives, pharmacists and other health care professionals will work as a team to ensure that the residents of Chatham–Kent Essex receive the very best care, day and night, and closer to home.

There are many individuals to thank across the riding, from Leamington to Chatham. Tilbury in particular has waited for 12 years for this announcement. I would like to thank two very special individuals, Karen Smith and Katie Taylor, co-chairs of the Tilbury and district family health team action group, for their persistence and hard work. They never, ever gave up.

Family health teams are a huge step on the road that is taking Ontario to a better health care system, a system that helps keep people healthier and delivers quality care to them when they need it and that will be there for generations to come.

### DAIRY AND POULTRY FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to acknowledge and welcome the dairy and chicken farmers of Ontario, known as FarmGate5, who are sitting in the gallery today.

The dairy and poultry boards got together and formed FarmGate5 so they could promote the positive contribution their farms make to the economy of Ontario. Their role is to bring together all people and organizations that believe in a strong agricultural sector and a prosperous food industry in this province.

The famous five of FarmGate5 include the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Egg Producers, the Ontario Turkey Producers'

Marketing Board and the Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission.

### 1340

It is important to note that the dairy and poultry farmers account for one third of the total farm cash receipts in Ontario. There are approximately 7,000 dairy and poultry farmers in this province, and last year they produced over \$2.5 billion worth of goods.

Since its launch in September at the International Plowing Match, over 7,500 Ontarians have signed the FarmGate5 supporter form. Of those who signed, I'm pleased to say that almost 50 MPPs have also signed in support of the FarmGate5 agenda, and I'm proud to say that I'm one of those. By building this grassroots network of support, FarmGate5 has been able to demonstrate that many Ontarians, on and off the farm, rely on and expect a strong dairy and poultry sector.

As MPP for my riding of Oxford, which we all know is the dairy capital of Canada, I would encourage my colleagues to join FarmGate5 for a reception in room 230 at 4 p.m. today. I'd also like to acknowledge the presence of the tobacco farmers in our gallery today. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to make this statement in the House today.

### FIRE IN COBOURG

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** I rise today to inform my colleagues of a massive fire which on Monday, April 25, 2005, engulfed Horizon Plastics, a plastics manufacturing company in the town of Cobourg in my riding. While this fire proved to be an extraordinary test for the people of my riding, not to mention the 300 employees of Horizon Plastics, public and private officials alike handled the situation in a diligent and courageous fashion. Indeed, while Cobourg's fire captain described the challenge as one of the biggest fires his force has battled in decades, firefighters courageously conquered this inferno.

I'm certain the members of this House will join me as I applaud the tremendous competence and boundless bravery of the more than 100 courageous firefighters who hail from more than 14 fire departments in Northumberland and surrounding communities, such as Peterborough, Oshawa and the Canadian Forces Base in Trenton. Their courageous efforts, accompanied by the Cobourg fire and police services and the local OPP officers, have prevented what could have been a catastrophe.

I would also like to commend Mayor Peter Delanty of Cobourg, as well as the emergency officials, who quickly declared a state of emergency so as to guarantee the safety of the residents of Cobourg. Mayor Delanty and Fire Chief Allen Mann should also be thanked for working with the officials from the Ministry of the Environment to provide community briefings every half hour so that residents could access the most current information.

The House should know that on Tuesday I attended a meeting with municipal and ministry officials, and I'm pleased to announce that, while the Ministry of the



Environment is still monitoring the situation on the ground, the state of emergency has now been lifted.

#### DAIRY AND POULTRY FARMERS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I have the pleasure of extending an invitation to all members of this Legislature to a reception this afternoon given by FarmGate5. FarmGate5 brings together people and organizations who believe that supply management is an integral part of a strong agricultural sector. The membership of over 7,000 consists of Ontarians from all walks of life, including farmers, agrifood partners and companies, financial institutions, consumer groups, unions, municipal governments, MPPs and MPs. I am a proud member of FarmGate5, as I know many of my colleagues in this assembly are.

Because of supply management, Ontario consumers are guaranteed a nutritious basket of high-quality dairy and poultry products that are among the least expensive in the world. In turn, their farming friends and neighbours get a stable income and a fair share of food prices. Last year's cash receipts from dairy, chicken, eggs, turkey and hatcheries were approximately \$2.5 billion at the farm gate. They are responsible for a further 60,000 jobs in this province.

Canada is committed to domestic supply management as a solution that works for consumers, food processors and the industry. Canada's position in the current world trade talks negotiations reflects that commitment. To assist the Canadian government in these negotiations, Farmgate5 has been organized in support of Ontario's dairy and poultry farmers. Come to the FarmGate5 reception in room 230 starting at 4 p.m., and take the opportunity to enjoy farm-fresh products, meet farmers and learn more about supply management.

#### CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to make a few comments on the COMRIF program, and I'm glad to see that both the ministers responsible for it are here. First of all, I want to say to you how thankful I am that the township of Severn in my riding received \$1 million for that funding.

However, I do want to point out an interesting fact. The county of Simcoe and its member municipalities, if we include the cities of Orillia and Barrie, make up 19 municipalities. They represent about 4.2% of the population in Ontario. In my riding alone, there were nine applications for COMRIF funding for the provincial share, and it would have amounted to \$22 million. I know it's only stage one at this point. However, it's very important that I put on the record for my residents and for the folks in the county of Simcoe and the cities of Barrie and Orillia that this is one of the fastest-growing areas of the province, and that has been compounded by your greenbelt legislation. We need to make sure that these

communities have the proper resources and the sewer and water systems and bridges etc.

Really and truly, although they received a total of \$1.535 million in the COMRIF announcement the other day, there was probably \$60 million or \$70 million applied for. We need to put on the record that these municipalities will be looking for substantial amounts more in the coming months, in the stage two announcements. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this today.

#### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** We often hear the phrase, "Children are our future." The McGuinty government is committed to them and their future.

That is why we created the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

That is why we added \$200 million more to children's services in our first budget.

That is why we announced our Best Start plan, which will help Ontario's children to be ready and eager to achieve success in school by the time they start grade 1.

That is why we are investing more in children's mental health services.

That is why we are hiring more therapists to provide IBI to young children with autism and to create new supports for children and youth with autism in the classroom.

That is why we are investing in children's treatment centres like the one in York region. The previous government failed to support the children of York region. Our government is committed to providing them with the services they need.

To end off, I would like to share this quote from Cindy DeCarlo, a parent and organizer of rallies to bring a CTC to York region just before Christmas of last year: "If I could have a fairy-tale ending to all of this, it would be that we had an announcement on Monday. You know what? My wish came true."

Thanks to the McGuinty government, which not only provided what I stated but, in particular, made sure that the region of York got a centre, which it did not have under any of the other political parties.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### COMITÉ PERMANENT DE LA JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

**M. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke-Nord):** Monsieur le Président, je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du comité permanent de la justice et je propose son adoption.

I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice policy and move its adoption. I offer it

to you through the page Inderraj Singh, of Etobicoke North.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 158, An Act to replace the Theatres Act and to amend other Acts in respect of film / Projet de loi 158, Loi remplaçant la Loi sur les cinémas et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les films.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, please say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1349 to 1354.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotan, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Brownell, Jim  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Duguid, Brad

Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Mauro, Bill  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Oraziotti, David  
Peters, Steve

Phillips, Gerry  
Qadri, Shafiq  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Takhhar, Harinder S.  
Tory, John  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Hampton, Howard  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Horwath, Andrea  
Klees, Frank

Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Munro, Julia  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Prue, Michael

Runciman, Robert W.  
Scott, Laurie  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Wilson, Jim  
Yakubski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 46; the nays are 19.

**The Speaker:** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

Bill 190, An Act to promote good government by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting one new Act / Projet de loi 190, Loi visant à promouvoir une saine gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant une nouvelle loi.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** The bill is a collection of technical and housekeeping amendments to many statutes to keep them up to date and correct errors in translation and language. Seventeen ministries submitted amendments. Each ministry's statutes are in one schedule, with the exception of two ministries which have offered more than one schedule. The commencement provisions for the content of each of the schedules are set out in the schedules.

#### APPRENTICESHIP AND CERTIFICATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'APPRENTISSAGE ET LA RECONNAISSANCE PROFESSIONNELLE

Ms Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 191, An Act to amend the Apprenticeship and Certification Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 191, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'apprentissage et la reconnaissance professionnelle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** This bill addresses the need for a new apprenticeship program in the province of Ontario. If passed, this bill would be the first step in gaining recognition for a new apprenticeship program in the fuel industry. The use of natural gas and oil touches all of our lives on a daily basis. It is imperative that we support the successful training and apprenticeship of people working in this field.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank my legislative intern, Rebecca Sciarra, in the gallery, for her extensive work on this bill.

#### MOTIONS

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### GOOD GOVERNMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA SAINE GESTION PUBLIQUE

Mr. Bryant moved first reading of the following bill:



**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Mr. Duncan has moved government notice of motion 351. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, please say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1400 to 1405.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bountroglanni, Marie  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Brownell, Jim  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Crozier, Bruce  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Klees, Frank  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Mauro, Bill  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Millooy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Munro, Julia  
Oraziotti, David  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry  
Qaadi, Shafiq  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Scott, Laurie  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Tory, John  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Hampton, Howard  
Horwath, Andrea

Kormos, Peter  
Marchese, Rosario

Martel, Shelley  
Prue, Michael

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 59; the nays are 6.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, the McGuinty government is setting the pace as the only jurisdiction in North America that is committed to replacing coal-fired electricity generation. We're doing this because we want to protect the best interests of Ontarians by reducing harmful emissions and cleaning up the air we breathe.

I'm pleased to rise today to advise the House of a significant new study, a study that illustrates the importance of our government's commitment to replacing coal-fired generation in the province. This study confirms that the replacement of Ontario's coal-fired plants will reduce the

health and environmental costs in Ontario. This independent study brings to light the massive hidden costs of coal-fired generation, and when the health and environmental costs are included, it is clear that coal-fired generation is not only the dirtiest option, it's also the most expensive option.

This study indicates a relationship between increased air pollution due to coal-fired electricity generation and up to 668 premature deaths each year in Ontario. It also indicates that 928 hospital admissions, 1,100 emergency room visits and a staggering 333,660 minor illnesses such as headaches and coughing are related to emissions from Ontario's dirty coal-fired plants each year. In addition to health damages, emissions from coal-fired generation also cause environmental damages such as greenhouse gas emissions, which are subject to the Kyoto treaty on climate change. That's a lot of pain and suffering, and it's simply not acceptable. The McGuinty government does not accept it, I don't believe any member of this House will accept it and I'm sure the citizens of Ontario will not accept it.

#### 1410

Our government came into office with a firm commitment to end the health and environmental damage caused by coal-fired generation. The study compared the financial health and environmental costs of four different scenarios of electricity generation in Ontario. With an annual cost of \$4.4 billion, the study found that coal-fired electricity generation is significantly more expensive than the other options considered. What astounded me was how much our seemingly cheap coal power was really costing the people of this province. There are massive hidden costs in terms of the health and environmental damages caused by coal. This is where the true cost of coal-fired electricity lies.

Let me clarify how this study was done, because I believe members of this House will want to be sure of the due diligence and care that went into it. The study employed well-respected techniques to forecast the change in risks that occur with the change in air quality. This includes the risk of illness and death. I'm sure members understand that it is impossible in a study of this kind to identify which specific deaths at which specific time are attributable to air pollution from any particular source but, at the same time, I think we all understand and accept that air pollution, like that form of emissions from coal-fired generation, does contribute to deaths and illness. And sadly, the impacts of air pollution affect the most vulnerable Ontarians: the elderly, the young and those who are already ill.

The study I'm sharing with you today follows a model many other governments use to estimate health damages associated with air pollution. It was undertaken by a team of experts in emissions modeling and cost-benefit analysis, and utilized a more comprehensive approach. Instead of using a time-series approach, which only accounts for short-term or acute health impacts of air pollution, we chose to employ a cohort analysis approach. This comprehensive approach takes into account the long-term

impact of exposure to air pollution. The Ontario Medical Association is also using this approach to update their vital groundbreaking work in modelling the illness costs of air pollution.

This study examined three options for generating electricity: all gas, refurbished nuclear and new gas generation, and stringent controls. I'm pleased to announce that all of these options have lower health and environmental costs than the status quo. However, even with stringent controls, the true cost of coal would be two and a half times more expensive than the financial costs considered in isolation. So I am here to tell you that the lowest cost scenario for Ontario's electricity future was a combination of refurbished nuclear and gas. Including health and environmental impacts, this option would cost \$1.9 billion annually, which is half of the annual cost of existing coal generation.

The choices are clear. The McGuinty government must stand by its commitment to replace coal in a way that is responsible, protects the best interests of Ontarians by reducing harmful emissions, protects the reliability of our electricity system and cleans up the air we breathe. We're well on our way to meeting that commitment. I'm pleased to again say that Lakeview is being closed tomorrow as scheduled and, shortly thereafter, we'll be announcing our plan to deal with the remaining coal-fired generation plants in Ontario.

The study I bring to your attention today demonstrates our commitment to the coal goal. It illustrates that there are alternatives to coal-fired plants, alternatives that will clear the air and make economic sense. Our time is now, so let's aim for a future we can be proud of. Let's strive to work together and deliver a cleaner, greener Ontario and a quality of life that is second to none. Let's strive for a healthy future, a future we long for on behalf of our children and our grandchildren.

#### BEEF RESEARCH FACILITY

##### **Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):**

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of touring the new beef research facility in Elora, one that is unique to Canada and will bring benefits to Ontario's beef farmers and consumers. The Elora beef research station is a great example of how government, industry leaders and the scientific community have collaborated to create new opportunities for Ontario's beef industry and our economy.

I am proud that the McGuinty government is one of the major funding partners for this project. Our support has helped to create a new 22,000-square-foot research barn that houses more than \$2 million in specialized equipment. This includes a feedlot that can monitor the individual feed intake of nearly 200 cattle and a handling unit for ultrasound, blood-testing and body composition measurements. It's the very first time this combination of equipment has existed in one facility. These tools will assist scientists with their current top research priorities of feed efficiency and beef tenderness.

This type of research, coupled with efforts by the industry to create a long-term recovery strategy, will give

Ontario's beef producers a competitive edge for the future.

The new beef research facility was made possible through several provincial funding channels via the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ontario Innovation Trust and the Ontario Realty Corp. I want to thank our other funding sponsors, the Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, as well as the University of Guelph for helping make this new facility a reality. In particular, I'd like to recognize the investments that have been made by the Ontario Cattlemen's Association. At a time of short-term uncertainty brought on by the BSE crisis, it took great courage and foresight for our beef farmers to find the funding to support long-term research.

Innovative research and development is the best way forward for a strong, prosperous future in Ontario's agri-food industry. The McGuinty government recognizes that education, research and technology transfer are essential to a vibrant, competitive agricultural sector. In addition to the Elora Beef Research Station, we fund 16 other research and technology transfer facilities in the province. Our government has been a strong supporter, both in the development of the new Elora barn and the ongoing research projects it houses. Through its support for the Elora Beef Research Station, our government is providing researchers with the advanced tools and techniques they need for innovative developments in beef production. These innovations will give Ontario beef producers access to better genetics, immunology, animal health and nutrition. Advances in these areas will translate into a stronger beef industry.

Earlier this month, I signed an amendment to the agricultural policy framework which will bring new agricultural research and development funding to Ontario. I'm pleased that we have worked with the federal government to secure more funds for our future livestock research through the wedge-funding component of the APF. By investing in strategic research and development, we are promoting the long-term viability and competitiveness of Ontario's agri-food industry.

I believe Ontario needs to build its reputation by attracting and retaining top-quality research professionals and providing leading-edge programs and technology. Our province is Canada's biggest economic engine and we need to keep that engine well oiled. By creating an unparalleled environment in research and education, we will attract the best minds and foster innovative ideas. These will be the keys to giving our agriculture and food industry a step up in a very competitive world.

The McGuinty government's support for the new facilities at the Elora Beef Research Station is helping all of us to take a step forward. On behalf of the government of Ontario, I welcome this new facility to our agricultural and scientific communities. We all look forward to the benefits it will bring to the people of Ontario.

Speaking of beef—I had the opportunity to speak to the Minister of Natural Resources about this—whenever you're out in a restaurant or in a store, ask if it's Canadian, and if it's not Canadian, say no.



**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Responses?**

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I want to thank the minister for his non-announcement today. Obviously this is something that has been going on for some time and the minister is just reiterating what has been happening. But I do, on behalf of the agricultural community, want to thank the minister and the ministry for being involved in this project, because I think they support anything that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our beef industry.

As we already know, in Ontario we have the safest and best food in the world. I think it is very important that the minister stand up from time to time to expound on that and make sure everyone in our urban community realizes it.

But what I think is more important is that we can have faith in what the minister is saying. I want to take the minister back to what's been happening in the last few days, which kind of calls into question whether the announcement really is what it says it is. The minister will recall that two days ago I asked him when the cheques for the market revenue would start to flow from his announcement of March 29. He said, "The cheques are flowing. The cheques started to flow last week." We called Agricorp and found out that this was not the case, that no cheques were flowing. In your absence yesterday, when you were touring the research station, I asked the Premier, "Why would you say"—and that's you, Minister—"on March 30 that the cheques would go out in two or three weeks, only to find out that they still haven't gone out?" The Premier stated yesterday that the cheques are being mailed out today and tomorrow. So what is the truth? Two days ago you said the cheques had already gone out last week; yesterday the Premier said they were going out in the next couple of days.

Minister, farmers want to be able to trust you and have confidence in what you say. Well, this is just another broken promise. When are you going to accept your responsibility to the farmers of Ontario, or are you going to continue with the Liberal promise-breaking tradition?

1420

**ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** I'll speak to what I consider to be another hot-air announcement by the Minister of Energy. I sincerely hope this is not more Liberal spin, desperately attempting to justify their irresponsible timeline for the closing of coal plants a year and a half from now.

What would be responsible is a cost-benefit analysis of clean coal and its relative cost vis-à-vis the environment, vis-à-vis our economy and with respect to the health of the people in Ontario. What would be responsible is a realistic timeline, and I would note that our leader, John Tory, sees a 2015 phase-out as a worthy goal. That's what it is: It's a goal we would have had, had we formed the government.

As government, we did work to mitigate emissions with a \$250-million investment in clean coal. The SCR—

selective catalytic reduction—units that have been applied are working. They are reducing emissions at your two favourite scapegoats: the OPG plants at both Nanticoke and Lambton.

Of course, I hear this government dismissing verified facts of emission reduction from clean coal technology because, very simply, it doesn't fit with their "Close coal in Ontario at all costs" agenda, when the reality is, once this government figures it out, that they won't have enough power to replace coal. They'll have to import coal from coal-fired plants in the United States, and we in return send jobs and investment to the United States, to the border states—and we import their air.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** On behalf of New Democrats, I want to respond. We have, yet again today, another \$110,000 exercise in media spin by the Minister of Energy. He spent \$110,000 to tell the people of Ontario that there are some health and environmental problems associated with coal-fired generating stations. People have known that for a long time. What people want to know is, what's the plan? What is the plan, for example, to replace coal? We still don't know what the plan is.

People want to know what the plan is for affordable electricity. We don't see any sign of that. People would also like to know, is there a plan for energy efficiency? We don't see that either. It's another spin exercise, another media exercise, that shows that the McGuinty government doesn't have a plan. They simply want to tell people something they already know.

What I find really interesting, though, when you look at what is not included in this plan, is: Was energy efficiency one of the options considered? What if you stopped using electric heat in the thousands of apartment buildings across this province that were built cheap in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and that use very inefficient electric heat? Did the McGuinty government look at that? No. They wouldn't look at that. Did they look at helping low- and modest-income families who have inefficient refrigerators or appliances in their home? Did they look at what a low-interest loan program would do in assisting those families to purchase energy-efficient appliances and reduce their consumption of electricity? No.

What the McGuinty government is interested in, and this is what people really ought to pay attention to, is natural gas and nuclear.

I invite, especially members of the media, to take a close look at this thing. Look at, for example, the presumed health costs. One of the presumed health costs, if you look at it, is that there are very few health and environmental damages with nuclear. I invite the McGuinty government to go to Elliot Lake and talk to the widows who live there about all of the uranium miners who died from cancer associated with mining uranium. You go talk to them.

I invite you to talk to Eric Mintz, an epidemiologist who looked at the situation at the Port Hope nuclear refinery. This is what he found:

"Many of the diseases that might be of concern in Port Hope are normally rare ones like brain cancer and leukemia."

The Premier should especially listen to this, because he likes to lecture everyone about children: "Since children generally have greater exposures and shorter induction times, the childhood data is of particular interest."

"Brain cancer was found to be highly elevated in Port Hope children during the period of 1971 to 1985, five times the provincial average."

"Children generally have greater exposures and shorter latency periods.... That the brain cancer excesses were greatest in children and appeared earlier is supportive of a real excess that is environmentally related."

"Ionizing radiation has been associated with brain cancer in research published worldwide."

"For all childhood cancers there was a 48% increase over expected rates and for childhood leukemia a 63% elevation over what might be expected."

The McGuinty government produces a report that tries to say that there are no environmental or few environmental and health consequences associated with nuclear. You should stop issuing cooked reports.

Even more, they then trot out a table saying that the costs of building nuclear plants are fairly predictable and low. Was this the \$4-billion estimate that you gave for Darlington, and then, when you completed Darlington, it cost \$15 billion—an \$11-billion cost overrun? Is this the billions of dollars that have been spent on refurbishing when it was only supposed to cost a little bit?

Look, don't insult people. You want to see a real study on coal? This is a good study on coal.

This is nothing but a cooked media exercise that isn't worth the paper it's printed on.

## VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I am sure the House will want to welcome people here from Chieti, Italy: students on an exchange program being hosted by their counterparts at Notre Dame College School in Welland.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** While the students are very much welcome, the third party House leader knows that's not a point of order.

1430

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday you said you were "proud of the new relationship we have developed with Ontario's municipalities.... It is good news for all the people of Ontario."

*Applause.*

**Mr. Tory:** I notice it's just a very few who are clapping, Mr. Speaker.

I want to quote from today's London Free Press: "'Elgin county council is both shocked and appalled,' Warden James McIntyre wrote...."

"The change would leave county officials with \$3.7 million less by 2008, a shortfall so deep the tax hike needed to make up the difference would be 20%."

Premier, can you confirm for the people supposedly represented by your Minister of Agriculture how proud the two of you are to be handing them a 20% property tax increase?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** We inherited a system that was broken, opaque and unfair. We have fixed that system. It is now transparent and it is now fair.

The leader of the official opposition tells us that he prefers the status quo. He, in fact, embraces the status quo. That would mean that in Caledon, for example, that community would receive \$1.2 million less. In Kawartha Lakes, that community would receive \$2.7 million less. In Port Colborne, they'd receive \$1 million less. I can go on and on.

If the leader of the official opposition is telling us that he has some alternate plan; that, in addition to taking \$2.4 billion out of health care and taking money out of public education and putting that into private schools, he has now found some secret pile of money to help those communities he's advocating on behalf of, then he should stand in his place today and tell us how much money he's going to flow to those communities.

**Mr. Tory:** All we're asking for is some fairness for all of the communities in Ontario. All we're asking for is some fairness for all of the people who choose to send their children to independent schools, and all we're asking for is some fairness to taxpayers, to whom you promised you would not increase taxes at the time of the last election.

Premier, the same London Free Press article confirms that Chatham-Kent, St. Thomas, Stratford, Sarnia and Elgin county will see taxpayers "stung" by your so-called fairer deal. Will you confirm that you have the full support of the member for Chatham-Kent Essex in cutting what local treasurer Stuart Wood says is about 14% of its tax base? He calls it "a huge hit" for Chatham-Kent. Can you confirm that you and the member for Chatham-Kent Essex think that this double-digit property tax increase for the people who live there is, to use your words, "good news" for them?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Let me tell you, first of all, that Pat Hoy is an absolutely marvellous representative on behalf of his community—absolutely marvellous.

I know that the leader of the official opposition will be interested in some of the comments made about this new Ontario municipal partnership fund.

Bill Murdoch, for instance, said, "I appreciate the money that Hanover is going to get: I will applaud that."

Here's the township treasurer, Margaret Black from Ramara township, who says, "With a \$685,000 grant from the province, Ramara township can potentially erase a projected 5.39% municipal tax increase and put a



large sum of money in the bank.... Taxes can't go anywhere but lower."

That is the end result of this new program. It is fair, it is transparent and it was desperately needed.

**Mr. Tory:** We agree that the member for Chatham-Kent Essex is a good fellow. You should probably start listening to him if he's saying to you that this is unfair that you're fleecing his taxpayers in this way.

Premier, according to municipal treasurers, St. Thomas will lose \$1.4 million in annual funding, Stratford will get about \$550,000 less and Sarnia will be down \$230,000. These are the numbers presented by municipal treasurers. Taxpayers in those areas, according to Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley, one of your fellow travellers, are being "fleeced."

You said that your new program is good news for all. Can you explain to taxpayers in Chatham-Kent, St. Thomas, Stratford and Sarnia, who are being let down by your Liberal MPPs, how getting fleeced is good news for them?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, the leader of the official opposition is a defender of the status quo, and we don't accept the status quo. Remember, the motivation for this came as a result of the supposedly neutral downloading process left to us by the Tories. We've decided to clean this up. We've introduced a new system that is fair and transparent.

Let me tell you about some of the things it does. Mr. Tory may not like this, but in Caledon they're getting \$1.2 million more; Kawartha Lakes, \$2.7 million more; Port Colborne, \$1 million more; Gananoque, \$302,000 more; Pembroke, \$418,000 more; Wilmot, \$556,000 more; Smiths Falls, \$568,000 more; Wasaga Beach, \$765,000 more; Gravenhurst, \$674,000 more; and Ingersoll is getting \$600,000 more as a result of this new program. I can tell you that people in those communities, as well as the Ontario Municipal Association, are pleased with this program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.

**Mr. Tory:** Only this Premier could describe a program that robs Peter to pay Paul as being fair.

My question is again to the Premier. Yesterday, when we asked about the funding cuts in Cobourg under this new so-called fairer program you continue to extol today, you answered that Leeds-Grenville, almost two hours down the 401 from Cobourg, is better off. Well, Augusta township in Leeds-Grenville will lose over \$150,000 in annual funding starting next year under this new McGuinty program. The township's chief administrative officer, Sharon Wilkinson, quoted in the Brockville Recorder and Times, says that residents could face a property tax increase of more than 120% as a result of your cuts. Premier, how can you explain that a 120% property tax increase, due to your cuts, is the good news that you keep standing here and talking about? How could that be?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I know the Chair of the Management Board is anxious to get in on this.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Again, I think the people of Ontario

should appreciate what we have developed here. This is a fair and transparent formula that treats all municipalities in the province fairly. It is open, it is transparent, and the people of Ontario should understand that.

Secondly, we're talking about adding \$38 million. This may not seem like a lot to the Leader of the Opposition, but to the taxpayers of Ontario, it's over a 6% increase in this fund. Every single municipality in the province will receive at least as much money in 2005 as they got in 2004. We think this is a fair and equitable formula, and it's responsible in the interest of the taxpayers.

**Mr. Tory:** Again to the Premier: You keep listing the people that you claim were on the elevator; we know the people who are getting the shaft here.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Tory:** Yesterday's Owen Sound Sun Times says the municipality of Grey Highlands will lose \$825,000 over the next four years under your so-called good-news-for-all program. According to Treasurer Alan Selby, that is 25% of that municipality's budget. He's quoted as saying, "We will have to raise our tax rates by 25% and/or make expense cuts over the next four years." Across Grey county, seven of the nine municipalities are losing money under this so-called fairer program. You said this is good news for all Ontarians. Are you proud of the good news that the 25% McGuinty property tax increase represents for residents of Grey county? Are you proud of that?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** What do the people of Ontario expect? They expect that their provincial government will treat every municipality fairly and equitably. You have not yet indicated any concern or disagreement with the fairness of the formula. The formula is fair. It treats each municipality fairly and equitably. I repeat to the people of Ontario: \$38 million more money in this fund this year, a 6.1% increase, no municipality getting less money and I think 250 municipalities getting more money. So I say once again to the leader of the third party, what do the people of Ontario expect from the provincial government? It's fairness, it's equity and that we treat every municipality fairly. That's exactly what this formula does. I have yet to hear you dispute the fairness of the formula. That's what this formula gives: fairness and equity to every municipality.

**Mr. Tory:** I think that the residents of St. Thomas and Sarnia and Grey Highlands and Huron county—which I'm going to talk about now—expect some honesty from this government. That's what they expect, but they're going to be waiting a long time for that.

Premier, Huron county is set to lose every single penny in annual funding under your so-called good-news-for-all program. Incredibly, your member for Huron-Bruce calls this good news for her riding. Huron county treasurer, David Carey, quoted in the Goderich Signal-Star said that at first glance the program sounds great, but it will cost the county in the long term. According to the county's own numbers, over \$2.4 million in

funding will be phased out over the next four years. Councillor David Urlin says the provincial changes were "on the back of rural Ontario again."

Premier, how can you and the member for Huron-Bruce describe a \$2.4-million cut in funding as good news for the residents of Huron county? How can you do you that?

1440

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I don't mean to embarrass the member. I know you are attempting to speak on behalf of the municipalities in Ontario. You put out a release the other day saying that in the riding of Perth-Middlesex, my colleague Mr. Wilkinson's riding, one of his municipalities, Southgate, was going to get a cut. Well, I should inform the people of Ontario that Southgate is not in Perth-Middlesex; it's in the Leader of the Opposition's riding. So I wonder if a page could come over and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'd just ask members to stop heckling the Chair of Management Board so he can just finish his answer in 10 seconds.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I will be sending a map over to the Leader of the Opposition, which indicates that Southgate is actually in your riding. So if you're purporting to speak on behalf of municipalities, I think they should understand that you are not quite sure what municipalities are in your own riding.

**Mr. Tory:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The residents of Southgate, which is in my riding—and I'm proud of that—are appalled at this cutback regardless of whose riding it is.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. That might be a disagreement, but it's not a point of order.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. The first 18 months of the McGuinty government have been difficult and painful for Ontario's children. Some 373,000 Ontario children live below the poverty line. Nine out of 10 Ontario children lack access to adequate child care. Hundreds of Ontario's autistic children are going without the IBI therapy they desperately need. Severely disabled children are being taken from their families, and custody is being taken by children's aid societies in order that those children can get the services they need. I would say this is simply inexcusable and unacceptable in Ontario today.

Premier, you promised to do something about these things, and so far these children haven't seen anything from your government. When are you going to keep these promises?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Speaker, you won't be surprised to learn that I take issue with the leader of the NDP's statements and assertions.

No government ever before has moved more quickly when it comes to helping children in this province, and

I'm very proud of our record. In our first 17 months or so, we have invested an additional \$1.7 billion to help children. We created a new ministry specifically responsible for children and youth services—never been done before. We've invested \$156 million for free vaccines for children. That saves the family, by the way, about \$600 per child. We have invested \$1.1 billion in education funding alone for smaller classes, more teachers, more training, a better learning environment and, not surprisingly, better test scores. We have invested \$365 million in special education funding and \$58 million to create 4,000 new affordable child care spaces. That is the first boost in 10 years.

We are proud of our record when it comes to supporting the children of Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** It's bizarre to hear the Premier take credit for, in fact, federal money that's come to Ontario.

Premier, this is what you had to say during the election: "We will help our schools develop good citizens through character education. Character education is about values such as respect, honesty, responsibility and fairness." But right now families are wondering: Does it show respect to refuse to meet with the parents of autistic children? Does it show respect when you refuse to meet with children who are affected by your promise to stop the clawback of the national child benefit? Does it show responsibility to promise 300 million provincial dollars for child care and fail to provide even a penny? Does it show fairness to discriminate against children because of age, disability and poverty? Premier, what lesson do you think children are getting as a result of your government's lack of character and failure to keep your promises?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Let me take the opportunity to tell you what else we are doing for Ontario children. Of course, my measure for success is not the leader of the NDP. We speak to reasonable, objective people in Ontario. Given our circumstances, I am proud that we have found \$1.7 billion for additional investment in programs that support Ontario children.

Some of the other things we have already invested in, and there is always more to do, but let me tell you about some of the things we have already done: \$25 million for children's mental health programs; that is the first significant increase in 12 years. Now, it is not enough for the leader of NDP, but we are proud of that. We have invested an additional \$64 million in our children's aid societies. Again, it is not enough for the leader of the NDP, but we're proud of that record. We've invested \$8.3 million in our Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program. It's not enough for the leader of the NDP, but we are proud of that program. I have more as well to list subsequently.

**Mr. Hampton:** It is interesting to hear Dalton McGuinty take credit for federal money invested in Healthy Babies, Healthy Children.

Premier, I want to ask you about just one child, who is seriously affected by one of your broken promises. She's a young girl named Natasha, who believed you when you



said you would stop clawing back the national child benefit supplement from her and her family. Here is what Natasha wrote on this postcard, and you might be interested to read this postcard. It says, "I like to draw animé and read those books, but our school library doesn't have them and my parents can't afford to buy them. Please help us by letting us keep the money."

Premier, where is the character in your government, when you promised to end the clawback of the national child benefit and then you do this to a little girl like Natasha?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Let me say that, again, I am very proud of the fact that we have stopped clawing back the national child benefit. That has resulted in a \$7-million increase this year alone. Next year's increase will grow to a \$20-million investment.

We are proud of our record when it comes to supporting Ontario's children, especially given our financial circumstances. We are proud of the fact that we have come up with an additional \$1.7 billion in addition to those programs I listed earlier. We found \$4.7 million in pre-school speech and language programs; \$1.2 million in a new infant hearing program; \$24 million over four years in capital funding for our children's treatment centres. Those are all good programs. They all speak to our fundamental values, which reflect the values of the people of Ontario. We are there for our children when they need us, and we will continue to do more for them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.

**Mr. Hampton:** To the Premier: You haven't stopped clawing back the national child benefit. This is what families get: \$1 a week. You keep 97% of the money, and don't try to fool parents, like parents here, that somehow you are not doing that.

I want to ask you about another situation. Ontario's new Ombudsman, André Marin, believes there is a very serious issue that requires in effect a special investigation into the care of children with severe disabilities. Many families, many parents across this province have to give up custody of their children to children's aid societies in order that their children receive the services they need. They're forced to give up custody, sometimes forever.

Your government has known about this for the last 18 months, yet you've done nothing about that as well. Tell us, Premier, where is the character in your government's behaviour on this issue?

1450

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I welcome the new Ombudsman to his post and look forward to working with him. But we did not wait for the new Ombudsman or his comments to start working on this issue; we've already started. The truth of the matter is that for over a decade there weren't any significant increases for children's mental health or children's treatment centres or anything for special-needs children in this province. The solution is to build capacity

so that all children can have the resources and therapies they need. We're doing that. Unfortunately it will not happen overnight, but we are well on our way to meeting the needs of the children of this province.

**Mr. Hampton:** The McGuinty government wants people to believe that stopping the clawback of one loonie a week is something really important for families who are struggling on the lowest incomes in the province. But what they're wondering about is this: They're getting a character lesson all right: the character of a Liberal government that neglects children with the highest needs in the province, the character of a Liberal government that breaks promises to children over and over again. Some parents are forced to give up custody of their children just to get the services they need.

Premier, it was you who said that character education is about values such as respect, honesty, responsibility and fairness. Where's the fairness to those parents? Where's the fairness to these kids who are struggling on the lowest incomes in the province, and you're taking 90% of the child benefit away from them every month?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I'm very proud of our government's record and the Premier's record in helping the children of this province. Last year, in a very, very difficult budget, we increased children's services by \$200 million, and that's only this ministry alone, not counting education, not counting community and social services and not counting health. I'd like to remind the honourable member of his government's record on mental health in children: They cut funding for mental health by \$23.3 million in 1992 and again by \$42 million in 1994. We increased mental health money for children alone by \$25 million in our first year, which grows to \$38 million in our second year. I'll put my record against his record any day.

**Mr. Hampton:** I've heard it said that the last refuge of a scoundrel is to try to rewrite history. This is the history of your government, Premier. I want to remind you of three promises that you made to children. Number 1, the baby bonus: "We will end the clawback—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Could I ask the government side to come to order. I cannot hear the leader of the third party's question.

**Mr. Hampton:** Number 1: "We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. This clawback is wrong and we will end it."

Promise number 2: "We are committing \$300 million in new provincial money for Best Start; we will spend this money in the right way for child care."

Promise number 3, on autism: "I believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending" IBI "treatment beyond the age of six."

Premier, today we are going to present a motion after question period holding you to your three promises. Are you going to show up to support and vote for your own promises?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I'm very proud to say that Best Start is well on its way. We've created 4,000 new spaces, the first investment in child care in over a decade. We have—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** The member from Hamilton's not in her seat.

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm quite aware of that. I'd like some order so that the minister can respond to the question.

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I'm very proud to say that we have significantly increased the funding for IBI therapy for children with autism, we have reduced the waiting list for assessment by 72%, and as of last month, 25% more children were receiving IBI therapy. We're the only jurisdiction in North America that actually does this on a systematic level.

On Monday, I met with the head of special education for the US government. No federal or state government even recommends any particular therapy, and yet we give up to 40 hour a week for children with autism under the age of six. Another comparison they don't want to hear is that in the United States, the children that do receive it, receive up to 25 hours. Again, we are the most generous in North America.

#### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, your Chair of Management Board was talking about fairness, but my warden in Renfrew county doesn't see much fairness in your Ontario municipal partnership fund formula. What looked like a reasonable, modest increase of 8.7% in 2005 turns out, once your shell game is discovered, to be a \$3.7-million decrease in 2006, a further \$500,000 in 2007, and \$850,000 less in 2008. This is not fair. For one of the most economically challenged areas of the province, my county of Renfrew, it simply cannot be tolerated. Massive tax increases will have to follow to ratepayers if you do not do something to assist places like Renfrew county. This is not fair. How do you square that with the people of Renfrew county and Warden Bob Sweet?.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** What is the purpose of this? It is to ensure that every single municipality is treated fairly. I remind the people of Ontario that we are fixing a dramatic problem created by the previous Conservative government, where they downloaded enormous services on to the municipalities and then developed a formula that made no sense. There was no logic to the formula. Municipalities told us, "We need a fair and equitable formula." So we've done what I think the people of Ontario would expect: a fair, transparent formula. I would

repeat: \$38 million, over a 6% increase in 2005. I think the taxpayers will be shaking their heads. Do you not think a 6% increase is fair? Do you not think \$38 million is fair? Do you not think the fact that every single municipality in the province gets at least as much money in 2005 as it did in 2004 is fair?

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** Premier, travel south to tobacco country. On March 29, your government announced \$15 million in transition funding for the tobacco counties of Elgin, Oxford, Norfolk and Brant. However, less than two weeks later, you announced the same tobacco counties will now receive a CRF cut of \$15.6 million. I quote Norfolk Mayor Rita Kalmbach: "Now we seem to be penalized and the heavily populated areas are getting the attention," and, "Certainly I am ready to lobby with the other mayors to tell Dalton McGuinty ... this is not good enough." Last night Norfolk county council indicated they're shut out of COMRIF. Councillor John Wells: "We seem left out in the cold." Councillor Ted Whitworth: "The McGuinty government seems systematically hostile to the interests of rural Ontario."

Premier, can you tell me, the mayor of Norfolk and Norfolk county councillors, why are you hostile to rural Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I go back to the inconsistencies between the facts and what the Conservative Party purports. They said there's going to be a \$47-million cut. There's no \$47-million cut. There's a \$38-million increase. Again the member, I think, has indicated a cut: No municipality in 2005 is getting less money than they did in 2004. We have developed a formula to deal with our municipalities that, if you look at it, is fair, transparent and deals with the issues the municipalities come to us with: policing; social services; a special part of the formula dealing with our smaller municipalities, our northern municipalities. It's a fair, transparent formula. I say to the people of Ontario again: \$38 million more, a 6% increase. No municipality is getting less money. I think that's what the people of Ontario would expect from us, and that's what we've delivered.

1500

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Three moms of autistic children are in the gallery today, wondering about IBI for their sons.

Jacob Vogels has been on the wait list at Kinark since April 2003. His family has taken out a loan and borrowed money from family to pay for his treatment.

Jonathan Cordona has been on the wait list at TPAS since May 2003. His family paid for IBI from September 2003 to December 2004 by remortgaging their home and borrowing money from family.

Joshua Currie started on the wait list at Kinark on December 16, 2002. He finally got service two days before his sixth birthday. He needs ongoing IBI.



Justice Kiteley's decision is forcing you to do what Dalton McGuinty promised to do, which is to stop cutting off children at the age of six. It means—just like McGuinty's promise meant—that you have to increase IBI to those under six and you have to start IBI in the schools for those over six to ensure that all the needs will be met.

Minister, what concrete steps are you taking to provide IBI at school and to increase IBI for those under six to ensure that the needs of Jacob, Jonathan and Joshua will all be met?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** The honourable member knows well enough that even before this decision by the judge, we had enhanced the under-six program. We had invested \$10 million of new money for the IBI program for those under the age of six. We had 25% more children under the age of six accessing IBI therapy, and we reduced significantly the wait list for assessment. The ruling has added complexities to the wait list, and we are studying the implications of those.

We also had, before the ruling, a school-based program to supplement the already very generous program that the Minister of Education has for all special-needs children in the schools, and I will talk about that some more in the supplementary.

**Ms. Martel:** Let me quote from what Justice Kiteley says about the school program:

"The Minister of Education failed to develop policy and give direction to school boards to ensure that ... IBI services are provided to children of compulsory school age. Indeed, the actions and inactions of the Ministry of Education and the minister created a policy barrier to the availability of IBI ... in school. The absence of ... IBI means that children with autism are excluded from the opportunity to access learning with the consequential deprivation of skills, the likelihood of isolation from society and the loss of the ability to exercise the rights and freedoms to which all Canadians are entitled."

That's your school program, Minister. You should be ashamed of it. When Dalton McGuinty made the promise that he did, if he meant what he said—and that is questionable—it meant that your government would have to provide IBI in the school and would have to increase services for those under six. I ask you again: What concrete steps are you taking to provide IBI in the school and to provide more IBI for those under six so that these children get the IBI they need?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** Before I answer the question, a point of clarification: The judge was not referring to my ministry's school-based program. She knew very well that it was a new program that was just being implemented.

We have some data from that program: Since September, our autism professionals have had more than 3,400 contacts with educational assistants and more than 2,200 contacts with teachers across the province. This is particularly important for the north and rural areas. We

are closing the gap between the resources that are available in many urban areas for children with special needs and those in the north. I would hope that the member opposite would care about what we are doing for the north, because 316 schools in the north are covered so far by our new program; 600 customized resources developed for teachers and EAs to help these children. So we are moving ahead to help children in the schools.

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. The Ontario Medical Association has long held that air pollution in Ontario has a significant impact on human health, and numerous studies have shown that our coal plants are some of the worst polluters in North America, let alone Ontario.

Minister, I understand you released a new study today that delves into the true cost of coal, which takes into account the health and environmental costs of coal and which better reflects the true sticker price of this form of electricity generation. I'm sure this study will be truly interesting to the members of the opposition and to this House. It will be interesting for my residents of Mississauga East to hear of this study. For all Ontarians, can you please impart some of the details of this study?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I'm pleased to respond to the question. When health and environmental impacts are considered, coal is shown to be the most expensive electricity generation option for Ontario. The study shows the true cost of coal is in air-pollution-related illnesses, hospital visits, and indeed, unfortunately, premature deaths. The true cost of coal is \$4.4 billion annually. Some 77% of this represents hidden health and environmental damages that coal causes. Replacing coal with mixed refurbished nuclear and natural gas generation would have total real costs, including health and environmental costs, of \$1.94 billion annually, half the cost of coal. More stringent controls on coal still result in total annual costs of \$2.8 billion, a billion more than the options we have been pursuing.

**Mr. Fonseca:** Minister, I have to say that I feel sorry for the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey. You see, on Monday he was in the Samia Observer, saying that the elimination of coal-fired plants is a good goal. But then, I guess, his caucus got hold of him. Perhaps dirty coal supporters like Jim Flaherty and John Baird are still calling the shots, because the next day the official opposition's supposed leader had the Samia Observer issue a correction to their Monday story. Not only that, but along with the correction a whole new story came out on Tuesday, and guess what the headline was. The headline was "Coal Not Ruled Out by Tory." That's quite a flip-flop. Even Ernie Eves supported the coal shutdown. Minister, what type of position is the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey taking?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The member is absolutely right. Let's be charitable and say the Tories have had a soft

position on this issue all across the province, and the issue changes from day to day.

Tomorrow, we will be closing Lakeview—the first closure of a coal plant. I should tell you, even though the Tories oppose that, even though they tell us to keep the coal plants open—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Here are the quotes from the House; here's Hansard. Toby Barrett: "Quite recently, this evening, the member for Halton mentioned that shutting down coal plants would be a huge mistake." There it is. John Baird: "But for Nanticoke and Lambton and the two in northern Ontario, the shutdowns are just foolish." He says keep it open. We say no, we won't. We say 2015 is too far off in the future. We've set a goal. We're moving to it. We're going to achieve it. We're going clean up the air and fix the mess the Tory government left this province for so long.

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Premier. Despite pleas from patients and their families, you refuse to fund treatment for orphan diseases such as Fabry, and notwithstanding a court order, you continue to refuse to provide funding for IBI treatment for autistic children. I want to read you another promise you made, and this is from your election campaign platform: "The number of deaths caused by anaphylactic reactions to food is increasing every year. Without immediate attention, severely allergic children can die from anaphylactic shock. To protect children with life-threatening allergies, we will require every school to develop an anaphylactic plan based on province-wide standards."

Mr. Premier, you have now been in government for 18 months. There is no such plan in the province to date. Have you changed your mind about this? Is it no longer urgent? When do you intend to put this plan in place?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The honourable member will know that, in 18 months, this has been a very activist government with respect to efforts and initiatives to protect our children. We have a tremendous advantage, obviously, on the very specific issue the honourable member raised, and it's to be found in the form of our government whip, who has brought forward a piece of legislation that I believe enjoys very significant support in this Legislature. It's before committee. This is a demonstration of our government's commitment to be able to move forward and make progress on an issue.

1510

I, like all members, am a recipient of significant interest from the community. But I just want to say to the honourable member that his attempt to signify this issue as one of inaction is rather inappropriate, given the very long list of initiatives targeted at children that the Premier

had the opportunity earlier in question period to apprise all members of.

**Mr. Klees:** I'd like to remind the Minister of Health and the Premier that the member from Brant introduced his bill, Bill 3, in this House some 18 months ago. It is not before committee. It is awaiting committee hearings. It has not been called for committee.

This Premier and this government refuse to live up to their promise to take action. In the words of the member from Brant, when he was debating this issue, he made it very clear that this is an urgent issue, that children are at risk—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I'll give you a chance to ask the question.

Could I ask the ministers to be quiet, please. When I say "ministers," I know there are some who are quiet in question period, but there are many who just keep on shouting down members when they are asking a question. I would appreciate very much if you'd keep quiet so I can hear the questions from the other side.

**Mr. Klees:** During the time of debate on Bill 3, the member from Brant made this statement in this House: "We've had examples of young children dying as a result of anaphylactic shock." This was an urgent matter. It was a promise by the Premier during the election campaign. We have had no action. This bill has not been called before committee.

I'm asking the Premier: Do you consider this an urgent issue, or are you going to break this promise, as you have done many others, and insist that people continue to beg you to look after it?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Government House leader.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Unlike the previous government, we sent this bill to committee. That party, when it was in office, voted against sending the bill to committee. We have offered to that party to begin calling private members' bills in committee.

I can assure you, this bill will be called in committee and it will receive the kind of hearing it deserves and, I'll remind the member, the kind of hearing it didn't get in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003: all years that that bill sat on the order paper and your government refused to deal with it. This government's taking action.

The member may want to refer to today's Hansard. It's on page 20, under the standing committee on general government: Bill 3, under Mr. Levac's name.

Let me tell you, if you start co-operating, we'll bring private members' bills to committees. You wouldn't even send them there.

We're proud of our record. We're proud of our member. Thank goodness he stood up on this issue.

### NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you continually and



almost daily break your promise to end the clawback of the baby bonus from kids whose parents are on social assistance. To date, 115 organizations and 30 municipalities have joined the Hands Off the Baby Bonus campaign. Perhaps you've seen some of the cards: a little boy named Dylan. His mother's in the audience today.

First Nations communities and leaders have added their voices to the campaign. Last week, Alvin Fiddler, the deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, said, "We will continue to apply pressure to the province to honour their campaign commitment" to end the clawback.

Your own minister is flying north to see the poverty of the First Nations. Premier, can you tell First Nations people across Ontario why you continue to break your promise to address the endemic poverty in their communities?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'm extremely proud that, for the first time in 12 years, my colleague Minister Papatello and our government increased social assistance for the most vulnerable in the province. I'm also very proud of my colleague and my government because we did stop going forward on the clawback from the federal government to the poorest of the poor, which is \$7 million extra money for parents and children who need it most. This number will increase to over \$22 million this year.

I also have to remind the honourable member across the way that part of the money that was planned with the former government goes to children's treatment centres and children's mental health programs, which often do help the most vulnerable and the poorest children in our province.

**Mr. Prue:** This government can find \$400 million for gambling in Windsor; this government can only find \$7 million for the poorest of poor children.

Mr. Premier, here's what parents affected by the clawback have to say: Madeline Chokomolin of Wahgoshig First Nation, a single mother of five, says, "This is only an effective system to keep the poor poor, while people like Premier Dalton McGuinty could dine on fine foods without giving a second thought to those children affected by the clawback."

Donna, from Keewatin, says, "I am raising three children and working. My children need the money you promised."

Maureen, from Hamilton, says, "Teenagers, as you must know, cost a fortune. How about some help? I helped elect you, so how about helping us too?"

Premier, this afternoon we will debate a motion calling on you to keep your promise to end the clawback, a promise you made and reiterated many times. Will you be there to debate it? More importantly, will you vote yes to keep your own promises?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I'm incredibly proud of another colleague, the Minister of Health, George

Smitherman, who increased significantly funding for the aboriginal healing wellness strategy, which was flatlined for 10 years.

Also, I'd like to remind the honourable member that we doubled, from \$4 million to \$8.5 million, student nutrition programs and increased the efficiency with respect to how they will be implemented in the schools. We also invested an additional \$8.3 million in Healthy Babies, Healthy Children. A lot of that money does go toward helping the poorest of the poor in the province.

I want to reiterate that for the first time in 12 years we've increased social assistance to the most vulnerable in this province. We know we need to do more, and we are working well together as colleagues, as a government, with the help of our municipal partners, and in future with our federal partners, to do even more for the people of this province.

#### FILM CLASSIFICATION

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. There's been a lot of talk in the press about Bill 158, the film classification legislation. As I understand it, the old Theatres Act was last updated in 1962, so it was obviously in desperate need of an update. Minister, how does this legislation reflect the changing marketplace while continuing to protect and inform Ontario's citizens? And how does this new legislation respond to last year's court decision on film classification?

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I thank the member for Willowdale for his question. At the members know, Bill 158 just appeared at committee yesterday. It deals with a court ruling that was handed down a little over a year ago. Our lawyers and the Attorney General's lawyers have reviewed the legislation and are quite confident that it lives up to the judge's ruling from a year ago.

I also want to point out the support that this piece of legislation has from an individual who has great respect in the community, Bill Moody, an educator and former chair of the OFRB. He said, as a result of our keeping the classification authority in the bill, "It's ludicrous to think that parents have the time, tools or expertise to preview every movie that their children may want to see or electronic game their child may want to play. A classification system that provides a consistent manner of reporting, to which parents can refer, that is clear and transparent has become a real necessity."

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. The member from Niagara Centre, could you just keep your voice down a bit.

**Mr. Zimmer:** Minister, parents rely on the film ratings when taking their kids to movies. I understand that video game ratings are being enforced, which is welcome news for the many parents shocked at the graphic materials in some of these games.

Sue Lott, counsel of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre agrees. She says, "As a consumer organization, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre supports the government's initiative, through the Film Classification Act, to provide helpful information to Ontario consumers. We are also pleased that this legislation respects the Charter of Rights' important protections around freedom of expression."

Minister, if this legislation is passed, the power of the film board to censor mainstream films will no longer exist. How, then, does the legislation ensure that the most vulnerable members of our society, our children, are still protected from seeing material inappropriate for children?

1520

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** The member has a very good point. The fact of the matter is that under Bill 158, we still remain in the classification business because we think that is an important public service that the OFRB does provide. I was disappointed, to be perfectly honest, that the NDP spent an awful lot more time not defending the rights of parents, not defending the rights of children, but basically cozying up to the pornography industry and supporting their point of view that we should be out of the classification business.

I believe that Bill 158 is on the right track. The Retail Council of Canada is supportive, as are the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, parents and educators. I'd urge the NDP and the member from Niagara Centre to spend a little more time defending the rights of parents and children and a little less time defending the rights of the pornography industry in Ontario.

### COURT SECURITY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the Attorney General. Your government received a report on October 9, 2003, just shortly after you were elected, which was the result of a broad consultation on court security undertaken by Hugh Thomas. That was almost 20 months ago. Now I understand you're consulting on this issue yet again. This time the member from Guelph-Wellington is leading the review of court security issues involving municipalities and police chiefs. We believe the time for consultation has come to an end and it's time for some action. As the minister responsible for court security in this province, please tell us exactly what options are on the table right now to resolve this issue and, specifically, are you actually considering having the province take over court security?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I thank the member for the question. Yes, we are continuing to not only speak with local municipalities and chiefs of police, who I regularly meet with, but with police associations on the subject of court security. It is, obviously, partly a jurisdictional issue that involves an independent judiciary, and their adminis-

trative independence is protected under our constitution. Then the issue becomes whether, in the courthouses themselves, the Ministry of the Attorney General is in fact going to be responsible for it or the municipalities are going to be responsible for it. It has been more than 10 years now that it has been a local decision involving local priorities and a local perspective that permits the appropriate security for each of those courthouses.

**Mr. Dunlop:** The McGuinty government's lack of action has left police services asking many questions. For example, the city of Owen Sound has a huge shortfall in the area of court security, and that's been drawn to our attention. I know that your government is floating the idea of taking the funding for the 1,000 promised police officers and using it instead to resolve the court security issue. That's our understanding and that's what's been drawn to our attention. If you're even thinking about doing this, police services need to know that, and they need to know now. They've already been subjected to more than their fair share of zero-dollar announcements from your government. Minister, why is your government even talking about breaking its promise of hiring 1,000 new police officers, especially to fix a problem that falls under your ministry?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** I'm happy to answer your question. I'll say, though, that the responsibility for court security falls under the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and I know, as justice critic, you'd know that.

We're working with municipalities to find solutions. It's the responsibility of municipalities. It's the local perspective that deals with court facilities to pay for these costs when they're used by neighbouring municipalities. I certainly am very interested in any suggestions the member may have with respect to how we might be doing a better job. I do believe that the parliamentary assistant to Minister Kwinter is leading an excellent review of court security issues, and I would expect that she would want to get your input on that as well. I thank the member for his question.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On February 17, and in fact again today, you said that you've created over 4,000 new child care spaces in Ontario. Minister, you know you misspoke. Here's your chance to correct the record. You claim the McGuinty government funded actual child care spaces. You know that the new spaces were created by the federal government. You had nothing to do with it. You promised to invest but, in reality, you haven't created—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order.

**Ms. Horwath:** You promised to invest, but in reality, you haven't created a single new not-for-profit child care space for any of the 30,000 children on the waiting list.



Why are you pretending to do something that you are not doing?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'm very disappointed that the honourable member uses those words to ask the question, because I know that she knows me, and I know her quite well and respect her, and I believe there's mutual respect.

There's no pretence here. When we made these announcements, we readily said that this was federal money. This was the first time federal money for child care was spent for child care in over a decade. There's no pretence there. But the lion's share of child care is still paid for by the province of Ontario. We look forward to working with Minister Dryden toward getting more money for child care and investing in our Best Start plan.

As I said earlier, our Best Start plan has already begun. One of the three demonstration sites which will guide us are in the honourable member's riding, and she knows that quite well, as well.

**Ms. Horwath:** Contrary to the flowery words of the minister, there are no new provincial dollars that are flowing for direct funding, nor Ontario dollars for more non-profit child care spaces—no investment in the issues that she describes for zero to threes, nothing for the over sixes. What kind of game is being run here, Minister? The expansion that you talk about is a waiting game. Direct funding of non-profit child care is a simple, clear and immediate solution.

When you were in opposition, you told advocates that you were committed to a directly funded model. Why have you changed your tune? There's no direct funding. Your model is about as seamless as a patchwork quilt. Admit that your approach is full of holes.

Will you commit to expanding the number of non-profit child care spaces by providing direct, stable core funding, and vote for our opposition motion today? Will you commit to fixing at least the 10 problems that the child care experts said you need to fix?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** First, let me clarify. When I was in opposition, I respected both the not-for-profit and the for-profit centres, because they are under the same regulations and provide excellent services for children across this province.

Having said that, 95% of our child care centres in schools are not-for-profit. We don't anticipate that to change for our Best Start plan. The member knows quite well, because I told her this last week, last Thursday—whenever we ate with the chamber here and in the Legislature—that the demonstration site monies are provincial money. The healthy babies is provincial money. The infant hearing is provincial money. So the member is wrong, and I'd be very happy to arrange for a briefing from my ministry.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. As you

know, today Abitibi Consolidated announced the putting up for sale of their mill in Thunder Bay. The company believes that this operation could create more immediate value to another party and is therefore preparing to sell the operation, whose fibre needs are met by associated crown licences. A freehold of more than 500,000 acres of privately owned timber lands near Thunder Bay is also going to be marketed for sale during the second quarter.

This is potentially bad news for the community of Thunder Bay and the employees of the Abitibi mill. Minister, can you tell us today what you are doing to help Abitibi Consolidated maintain their workforce?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources):** I'd like to thank the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan for the concern that I know he has. He has spoken to me many times about the consolidation that is going on in the pulp and paper industry, and I know how dependent Thunder Bay is on this particular sector of the forest industry.

I and my ministry have met with this particular company three times and are working with them on their plans. We think there's a tremendous opportunity here in Thunder Bay, as they realize more value in that plant and put it on the market. I'd ask the member to work with the community, to help attract investors to make sure that this mill goes on to be a strong contributor to the economy of that particular plant.

I'd like to thank my colleagues the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Energy for their co-operation. They have sent a fact-finder to these companies right now, examining what the cogen opportunities are for these companies. Together, we're going to make sure we have a strong northern economy.

1530

#### PETITIONS

##### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth"—Alliston—"is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I want to thank Larry Whitmore of Loretto for circulating that petition, and of course I've signed it in support.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: "Whereas rebuilding our post-secondary education system is critical to the future of our communities and our province; and

"Whereas high tuition user fees are resulting in massive student debt; and

"Whereas Ontario ranks second-last among all provinces in terms of total PSE budget received from government grants and has the highest percentage of total post-secondary education revenues from private sources; and

"Whereas working and learning conditions must be healthy and safe, because working conditions are learning conditions; and

"Whereas the deferred maintenance cost at Ontario university campuses is estimated to have already reached the \$2-billion mark;

"We, the undersigned, support the Canadian Union of Public Employees' call on the provincial government to invest sufficient public funds that will:

"(1) Restore public money cut from operating funds since 1995 and bring Ontario up to the national average for funding post-secondary education;

"(2) Finance the \$1.98 billion needed for deferred maintenance; and

"(3) Provide the funding needed to continue the tuition freeze beyond 2006 and increase grants to working-class families."

I support this petition.

#### HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas noxious odours from the Halton recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

"Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face threats to their health and well-being and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

"Whereas for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment, as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force

Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue."

I affix my signature as I am in complete agreement with this petition.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario's three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

"Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario's regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm sending it down by way of Owen.

#### HEALTH CARE SERVICES

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current government has eliminated OHIP coverage for chiropractic services; and

"Whereas the current government has eliminated and reduced OHIP coverage for optometry services; and

"Whereas the current government has eliminated and reduced OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services; and

"Whereas the current government has refused to fund treatment for autistic children even after the courts and human rights commission ruled it should; and

"Whereas the current government has now decided to fund sex change operations, even though the Canada Health Act deems it not an essential health service;



"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario does not fund sex change operations and reinstates funding for delisted health services."

I affix my name in full support.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario's three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

"Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario's regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

It is signed by people from northern Ontario. I'm in agreement and would affix my signature thereto.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** I have a petition here submitted on behalf of Minister Watson. It's from Laurentian High School, J. S. Woodsworth Secondary School, St. Paul's High School, Deslauriers school and Woodroffe High School.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke is the number one preventable killer in Ontario today, and there is overwhelming evidence that retail displays of tobacco products (power walls), in plain view of children and adults, increase the use of tobacco, we have collected ... postcards signed by persons from our

school and community supporting a smoke-free Ontario in 2005 and banning the use of power walls which promote tobacco use.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to make all public places and workplaces smoke-free and to ban the use of power walls. The city of Ottawa has been smoke-free since August 2001. All of Ontario deserves clean air."

I'm very pleased to submit this on behalf of Minister Watson.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition signed by good citizens of Cambridge.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities as well; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas by imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intentions of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario exempt Legion halls, navy clubs and other non-profit, private or veterans' clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

I agree with this petition, and sign my name thereon.

#### HEALTH CARE SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government is cutting provincial funding for essential health care services like optometry, physiotherapy and chiropractic care;

"Whereas this privatization of health care services will force Ontarians to pay out-of-pocket for essential health care;

"Whereas Ontarians already pay for health care through their taxes and will be forced to pay even more through the government's new regressive health tax;

"Whereas the Liberals promised during the election that they would not cut or privatize health care services in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the McGuinty Liberal government keep its promises and guarantee adequate provincial funding for critical health services like eye, physiotherapy and chiropractic care."

I'm in agreement and will affix my signature thereto.

1540

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** I have a petition from parents and concerned residents with regard to the pending closure of Ross Mineview school.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Renfrew county district board of education trustees voted March 29, 2005, to close Ross Mineview Public School in September 2005; and

"Whereas the Liberal government promised in their press release of February 17, 2005: 'Final decisions about changes to operating funds will be made later this spring. Revisions will be made to improve support for small schools, boards with smaller average school size and high declining enrolment jurisdictions. The revisions' objectives will be to make all schools serving single communities operationally viable'; and

"Whereas Ross Mineview is the only elementary school in the rural community, formerly Ross township (northwest of Renfrew);

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To reverse the decision of the Renfrew County District School Board and to provide the funding to keep Ross Mineview Public School open and make it operationally viable."

I affix my name to this and send it to the table.

### HEALTH CARE SERVICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government is cutting provincial funding for essential health care services like optometry, physiotherapy and chiropractic care;

"Whereas this privatization of health care services will force Ontarians to pay out-of-pocket for essential health care;

"Whereas Ontarians already pay for health care through their taxes and will be forced to pay even more through the government's new regressive health tax;

"Whereas the Liberals promised during the election that they would not cut or privatize health care services in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the McGuinty Liberal government keep its promises and guarantee adequate provincial funding for critical health services like eye, physiotherapy and chiropractic care."

I agree with this petition. I've signed it, and I'm sending it to the Clerk's table by way of Alexandra.

### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities as well; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intentions of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly exempt Legion halls, navy clubs and other non-profit, private or veterans' clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

I want to thank Edward Beaven, veterans' services officer of the Royal Canadian Legion, Tottenham Branch 329, for circulating this petition.

### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I have another petition similar to the first one from today, but this is from the good people in the Barrie-Orillia-Newmarket-Bracebridge area. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario's three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

"Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario's regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into centres of excellence to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm in agreement and would affix my signature thereto.



## OPPOSITION DAY

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have an opposition day motion on behalf of New Democrats. It reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its promises to Ontario children.

Regarding the baby bonus: "We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. The clawback is wrong and we will end it."

Regarding early learning and child care: "We are committing \$300 million in new provincial money for Best Start." "We will spend the money offered by the federal Liberals on regulated, centre-based child care."

Regarding autism treatment: "I believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six." And that the McGuinty government must not appeal the Ontario Superior Court ruling regarding the rights of autistic children to receive this treatment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day motion number 2.

**Mr. Hampton:** New Democrats have brought this motion today because Premier McGuinty, before and during the election campaign, made these promises to children and parents across Ontario. In fact, these promises were widely distributed and repeated over and over again. The McGuinty government said to parents and children that these promises were things that this government would implement. We are now into the second year of the McGuinty government and these promises haven't been fulfilled, and it has created great hardship for children and parents who believed these promises.

I want to deal just briefly with the first promise, the promise to end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. I want people at home to understand what this is. When I was growing up, as a child, we had something known as the family allowance. The family allowance cheque came every month. A family received a certain amount of money, through the family allowance, per child in the family. In my family, the family allowance was something my mother looked forward to every month. That's when I maybe got a new pair of running shoes, or maybe I got a pair of skates so I could play hockey that year, or maybe I got some new clothes or a winter jacket. The family allowance was very important for virtually all families across Ontario.

In 1997, it was changed to the national child benefit supplement, and something unfortunate happened. The poorest families in Ontario, the lowest-income families in Ontario—families who have to rely upon social assistance or families who have to rely upon the disability support plan—had this money clawed back from them. This money that virtually every family would look

forward to in terms of their children, the McGuinty government clawed back from the lowest-income families.

What does this mean? For those lowest-income families, it means an awful lot. It means, for the first child, taking \$1,500 away from that family. For the second child, it means taking \$1,300 away from that child. For a single-parent mom with two children, it's almost \$3,000 a year that the McGuinty government is clawing back, taking away from those poor kids.

#### 1550

Recently—we just heard him today—Premier McGuinty tried to pretend that he'd ended the clawback. What this government did was end 3% of the clawback. For a lowest-income family with one child, it means they get one loonie a week and the McGuinty government keeps all the rest. For a low-income family with two children, it means that, thanks to the generosity of Premier McGuinty, they get \$2 a week, a toonie a week, but the McGuinty government keeps all the rest of the money.

I think this is shameful. I think it is shameful to take advantage of people in this way, to make such a promise before the election and not have a plan to implement it, and not implement it.

Then there's the issue of autistic children and IBI treatment for children who suffer the affliction of autism. Let me tell you what is so heartbreaking about this for parents. Parents who are fortunate enough to receive IBI treatment for their children under age six see a dramatic change in their children. For the first time, they see their children able to be communicative. They see their children learn toilet training. They see their children able to interact. They see their children learning to read. They see their children learning to speak and carry on a conversation. They realize that this is very effective treatment for their children.

Premier McGuinty said before the election that it was wrong to eliminate this treatment as soon as a child turns age six. But what did he do right after the election? He forgot about his promise. In fact, this government has spent tens of millions of dollars fighting these parents in court—tens of millions of dollars of public money for the Premier not only to break his promise, but then to go to court to defeat these parents.

Now that the Ontario Superior Court has ruled in favour of these parents, what's the Premier going to do? He's going to spend tens of millions of dollars of public money again to appeal that decision, when the courts have told him he's wrong to break his promise. Not only is he wrong to break his promise; it is dishonest. And it's heartbreaking for these parents for the Premier to do what he has done to them.

Then there's the issue of child care. Go to any community across this province and see the number of parents—he's working, she's working, or she's a single mom and is working to try to support the family—who need access to good-quality, regulated, not-for-profit child care. The Premier said before the election that his government would put \$300 million a year into a child care strategy like that.

What's happened after the election? Has there been \$300 million of provincial money? No. Has there been \$200 million of provincial money? No. Has there been \$100 million of provincial money? How about even \$50 million, \$25 million or \$10 million of provincial money into that child care strategy? No. Nothing.

New Democrats are here today to hold Premier McGuinty accountable and responsible for the promises he made before the election and the promises, now, that he wants to pretend never happened. We're here to hold him accountable for the way in which he's treated these children.

What I think is perhaps the worst situation of all is that it seems as if Dalton McGuinty never, ever intended to keep these promises. There is no plan. There is no strategy. It looks as if these were promises made when the Premier was trolling for votes; these are things that were said to get people to vote for him. But there is no plan, and there is no indication of there ever having been a plan, to implement these promises.

So we are here to hold the McGuinty government and Premier McGuinty accountable for these promises: promises made over and over again to vulnerable children; promises made over and over again to children who live in poverty; promises made to children who need good-quality, not-for-profit, regulated child care, and promises that have been broken day in and day out by Premier McGuinty and his government.

I have several colleagues who want to speak to this resolution. I simply say that I wish we had more members of the McGuinty government here, including the Premier, to address the promises the Premier made.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I remind the member that you don't refer to anyone's absence, please.

Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** It seems that the government is not interested in debating this at all.

I would like to quote the Premier for what I have to say, because there are people across this province who actually believed the man. There are people who still believe him. This is what he said, in a couple of very poignant sentences that reached a lot of very poor Ontarians: "We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. The clawback is wrong, and we will end it."

Every day in this province there are children who go to bed hungry. Every day in this province there are children who go to school without enough nourishment to allow them to learn. Every day in this province there are children who could be helped if the government lived up to the promises they made during the election.

According to Statistics Canada, there are 373,000 children in Ontario who are living in poverty. That is a shame; that is a disgrace in a province such as ours. Of those, 164,000 have monies clawed back from them and from their families each and every month. To put that in perspective, that's like every single person in a medium-sized town like St. Catharines being discriminated

against by this government. It's like taking a whole section of a population, a whole section the size of the city of St. Catharines, and saying to them, "We're discriminating against you. We are going to make sure that your poor and vulnerable children do not have the food they need, do not have the clothing they need, continue to live in poverty and have a lifestyle that is, from this point on, affected throughout the rest of their lives because they had the temerity, the unmitigated gall to be born into families that had problems: a marital breakup, someone who died or someone who simply could not make it in today's society.

This government says they're doing something about this. I want to remind them that not deducting the 3% recently still lets you keep 97% of the money from the poorest of the poor children.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** That's fair, isn't it?

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Disgusting.

**Mr. Prue:** That is hardly fairness; that is disgraceful.

There are people in this province who are starting to fight back. There is presently a Hands Off campaign. I think some of the Liberal members may have got the postcards. You may have seen the little boy on the front; his name is Dylan. I want you to think about him when you get that postcard. Dylan, his mother and his sister, Zoë, get a couple of hundred dollars every month, and you take it off him, his mother and his sister every single month. You take \$1,500 from Dylan, and you take another \$1,275 from his sister, Zoë.

Liberals have argued, "We need this money." I'm sure they need money—not this money, but they need money. Other provinces that are poorer than we are are able to live up to the promises they make during election times. New Brunswick promised to end, and not do, the child clawback. New Brunswick has no child clawback. Manitoba recently said they were going to end the clawback and that it was going to take a couple of years. They ended the clawback, and today every single child, the poorest of the poor in Manitoba, gets the federally directed funding that you deny to poor children.

**1600**

You make—I guess you're proud of it—\$250 million a year off the poorest, most vulnerable people in this province: our children, those whose parents live on social assistance or the ODSP. It's \$250 million you could easily get from other sources if you wanted to. Virtually all these same parents who subsist—I say "subsist" because they hardly live—on this pittance of income that is given through social assistance pay no income tax to the province or the federal government. You can't get any money from them from taxation, so you take it in a different way. You take money that is directly owed to them. You take it off them because you can't get it from direct taxation.

If you took that money from the taxation system, the people who could most afford to pay would be the ones who paid. Surely the members of this Legislature, with salaries of \$85,000—I know it's not much—I suggest to



you are in a much better position to pay for this than welfare mums. They are much better able to pay for this than people who are on ODSP. They are much better able to pay for this than Dylan.

Virtually all these families go to food banks. It has been estimated that if you ended the clawback, at least 75% of them would not have to go once a week to the food bank to get their food, to go in and ask for food they cannot afford to buy.

This government has said—they're really magnanimous—that they've ended \$7 million worth of the clawback. That is a pittance. It is one loonie per week per child. That's all it is. You've said that next year, wow, you're going to give \$20 million. The only problem with that is that the federal government's own Web site gives the following information. The federal government's Canada Revenue Agency Web site has the new NCBS rates for July 2005. The annual increase will be between \$211 and \$205, depending on the number of children. If parents on social assistance are able to keep all of that, the total amount of the NCBS flowing through to parents should increase to \$40 million annually. However, this government is only going to give them \$20 million. It appears this government is bound and determined not even to give them next year's amount, which is going to increase, but only half of it.

I grew up in Regent Park. I saw enough, in my early days, of poverty. I saw enough, in my early days, of poor children not having enough to eat, of kids going to school without adequate clothing or with shoes full of holes. I saw enough of kids who didn't have an opportunity to get an education. I saw enough of kids who quit school as soon as they turned 14 or 15 years of age to go out to nonexistent, mindless and mind-numbing jobs. I saw enough of the poverty and hopelessness of their lives that this federal money is supposed to try to stop.

I saw families who needed that money, that baby bonus that came in; mothers who got the money and spent it wisely, whether it was on food, clothing or maybe even a tiny little luxury here and there for their children, so that they could go to school and occasionally go to the museum if their class went to the museum, or have some hot dogs once in a while—we didn't have pizza lunches in those days—when they were brought in, or some milk every once in a while when the school made it available.

That money was never wasted. That money is never, ever wasted. It is used in a good, socially progressive way. This government cannot say the same thing. Although I say good for them for spending some of these ill-gotten gains on social programs, it is hardly affecting the people from whom they are taking the money. It has such a detrimental impact on the poorest of the poor that it is unconscionable that they are not ceasing this horrible policy that they themselves have recognized, that Premier Dalton McGuinty, leading up to the election, recognized, as a social blight upon this province.

I ask the Liberals opposite: If you keep only one election promise—and you're not doing very good yet—

end the clawback. You will do more to alleviate child poverty in this province than any other single measure that you can take: You will help more poor kids to have food, you will help more poor kids to get an education, you will help more poor families to make ends meet, and you will do much more for the social fabric of this province than any other single action you can take. Have the guts to do it. If you have to find the \$250 million by taxing me or taxing rich people more or people who can afford it, then have the guts to do it, because taking the money and the food from Dylan's mouth is the wrong thing to do.

**Ms. Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to debate this opposition day motion put forth by the member from Kenora-Rainy River. Because of my limited time, my focus is going to be on the autism piece of the resolution.

I welcome the opportunity to set the record straight on facts about the complex nature of the spectrum of autism and the solutions that are needed. The best expert opinion is that there is no single approach to treatment for autism and that treatment for autism must be a flexible, multidisciplinary approach dealing with the various degrees of severity.

There is an overview on the Autism Society of Ontario Web site. For anybody who is interested, there is more detailed information. It provides an in-depth understanding of the facts, and not just what we sometimes hear here, particularly from Mr. Hampton. It's a simplistic partisan approach that unfortunately too often permeates this Legislature.

"It is estimated that over 20,000 people in Ontario today have autism or some form of pervasive developmental disorder. It's one of the most common developmental disabilities. Yet most of the public, including many professionals in the medical, educational and vocational fields, are still unaware of how autism affects people and how they can effectively work with individuals with autism."

There are several types of autism identified: "In other words, the symptoms and characteristics of autism can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations, from mild to severe. Although autism is defined by a certain set of behaviours, children and adults can exhibit any combination of the behaviours in any degree of severity.... Therefore, there is no standard 'type' or 'typical' person with autism."

Then there is the question about what causes autism. Researchers from all over the world are searching for the answer to this question. To better understand this affliction this government, under Dalton McGuinty, is investing in research and working to develop college and university specialization to train people in autism treatment approaches. This hasn't been done before. Here in Ontario we have set up a research chair on autism at an Ontario university. This initiative will increase the knowledge base and begin to deal with the more complex work to find answers and increase an understanding of this complex disorder called autism, which is showing up in

increasing numbers in our children. I know that Mr. Hampton does not really want to address this or even acknowledge these significant steps. These steps are about the future of how we deal with this ailment.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has developed a one-year Ontario college graduate certificate program in autism and behavioural science, because you see, to deal with this, we need qualified individuals.

1610

This complements and expands the current two-week intensive behavioural intervention in-service training. It was two weeks; that's all it was. We're extending it to a year. When fully implemented, this program is going to provide 245 students each year with specialized skills, including training in IBI. Of course, this is of no consequence because the leader of the third party would have us believe that absolutely nothing is being done in autism. I wish he were here to hear the comments being made about the facts of the situation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Sarnia-Lambton—

**Ms. Martel:** That's OK, I'll respond.

**The Deputy Speaker:** And I don't need the help from Nickel Belt either, but we don't refer to members' absences, please.

**Ms. Di Cocco:** I apologize.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Nickel Belt, I don't need your help today.

**Ms. Di Cocco:** As well, there are no medical tests for diagnosing autism. Diagnoses must be based on observations of the individual's communication, behaviour and developmental levels. And these are not my words; these are from Autism Society Ontario. The characteristics of the disorder vary so much that a child should be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team, which may include a neurologist, a psychologist, a developmental paediatrician, a speech and language therapist, a learning consultant and/or other professional knowledgeable about autism. There's no template, in other words, for a quick diagnosis.

An accurate diagnosis and early identification can provide the basis for building an appropriate and effective educational and treatment program. It's not about one program, it's about a comprehensive approach. We have expanded autism programs for preschool-aged children by more than 25%. It may not be enough for the leader of the third party, but it is certainly moving forward in a very progressive way. We don't have a magic wand and can have it all done yesterday. We had to start from scratch and move forward. We've hired 110 new therapists. We're improving the supports provided to children with autism and we're decreasing the waiting time for assessment. We've decreased that by 72%, from more than 1,000 in March of last year to 287 in March 2005. This is a significant, measured improvement. These are results. Of course, as I say, the leader of the

third party chooses not to give any credit for any of the results because, for him, the sky is always falling in.

In the end the question is, what are the most effective approaches for treatment? Because of the spectrum nature of autism and the many behaviour combinations that can occur—and again, these are not my words; these words are from Autism Society Ontario—no one approach is effective in alleviating symptoms of autism in all cases. The more severe challenges of some children with autism may be best addressed by structured education and behavioural programs, which can contain a one-on-one teacher-to-student ratio or small group environments. However, many other children with autism may be successful in a fully inclusive general education environment with appropriate support.

To be effective, any approach has to be flexible in nature, rely on positive reinforcement, be re-evaluative on a regular basis and provide a smooth transition from home to school. I know the premise of this opposition motion is that there is one solution, and the one solution is all that is important. But we have to look at the whole process. We have to look at the holistic approach in dealing with this matter.

A good program will also incorporate training and support systems for parents and caregivers, which we are doing. Rarely can a family, a classroom teacher or other caregiver provide effective habilitation for a person with autism unless offered consultation or in-service training by an experienced specialist who is knowledgeable about the disability.

We are moving from a system that narrowly focuses only on severe cases to one that deals with the broad spectrum of autism, just as the experts believe is the best approach overall. These supports are newly hired autism consultants—we've hired 75 so far to support children in classrooms—doubling the number of transition coordinators to help children move smoothly from preschool programs into school, and new guidelines which will enable more children to be assessed sooner.

Margaret Spoelstra, executive director of the Autism Society Ontario, said, "Taken together, these supports will go a long way toward removing barriers for children and youth with autism." She went on to say, "These supports will also position Ontario to become a leader in this field, both nationally and internationally." As the minister has stated, we in Ontario today provide the best access to services for autism in North America.

One of the most significant actions that this government has taken, which has obviously been lost on the leader of the third party, is that for the first time we have put into place a ministry for children and youth. It's never been done before. We're the only ones who have done it. A lot of people have talked about it, but we have done it.

We will not be supporting the motion, as it is not about constructive solutions to a significant problem. This government is moving forward with commitments on programs for children and youth as no other government has done before. Therefore, we fundamentally disagree with the premise of the opposition day motion.



**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** I intend to address the motion on the floor by focusing on the promise-keeping theme. The leader of the NDP has introduced today a theme that I've certainly discussed at length in this room and a theme that obviously is falling on deaf ears across the way.

Mr. Hampton's motion begins, "That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its promises to Ontario children." I couldn't agree more, and I certainly extend that beyond children to all Ontarians, children and adults alike, something again that this government does seem loath to do.

We have a track record here of illegal tax hikes, budget tax hikes, deficits in the budget, delisting of health services and how that relates to a march toward two-tier health care, and more recently the better deal for municipalities, a pledge that has been made in recent testimony before the House and in question period and something that has become a bit of a twisted joke over the last week or two. So the list goes on and on. The NDP have made many references this afternoon, and I wish to continue and to broaden that further.

You know, in attempting to impress on this House the importance of keeping promises, I have made reference to cautionary tales. I think a year or so ago I made mention of Honest Abe Lincoln. Pinocchio, of course, is another story, and there's the poem entitled "The Boy Who Never Told a Lie." I don't seem to be getting my message across, and I'd like to try again.

Again, I think of a very well known story about the first President of the United States, George Washington. As we all recall, young George Washington told the truth about chopping down his father's cherry tree. He did that very simply because it was the right thing to do. George's father, according to that story—and I quote the story—indicated to his son, "I'm sorry to have lost my cherry tree, but I'm glad you were brave enough to tell me the truth." That's exactly what people came to believe and expect of the first President of the United States. That is obviously the mantra of Honest Abe Lincoln, and that's exactly what people in Ontario expect of their elected representatives and their leader. They expect the government to be brave enough to make those sometimes tough decisions, especially when one is in government, and to do the right thing, and to hold honesty and keeping promises as a very high priority, no matter what the consequences may be.

1620

We are discussing broken promises this afternoon. It's a trail that grows longer day by day. It clearly shows that this government is not prepared to make that kind of stand. They won't admit they made some broken promises. We were told last spring that the illegal tax was a health premium; this is the health tax I'm referring to. Very simply, it was a removal of money from people's pockets. Many have come to realize that very recently as they work through their income tax forms or, if need be, sit down with their accountant. This kind of approach truly is not representative of the type of honesty that peo-

ple in Ontario expect. It's certainly not what they would expect from the government they elected a year and a half ago.

Again to take a page from the storybook about George Washington, about Abe Lincoln: Stand up for truth and keep the promises.

I refer back to the 2004 budget. We will have a new budget in the next few weeks. The story of that budget: Instead of beginning with, "Once upon a time in the land of fairy tales," at present we begin with, and I quote Dalton McGuinty, at the time leader of the Liberal Party, before he was Premier: "I ... promise, if my party is elected as the next government, that I will not raise taxes or implement any new taxes without the explicit consent of Ontario voters, and not run deficits. I promise to abide by the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act." This statement was signed by Premier McGuinty in 2003, on September 11. It was just about a year later, after in a sense hoodwinking Ontarians to vote for them for such a pledge, that we find this government defending itself in court on the basis that it doesn't have to tell the truth. The judge seemed to agree with that as well. I find that hard to believe. I think it's sad when people are told by a judge that they don't necessarily need to expect, or perhaps shouldn't expect, their elected representatives to keep their word.

That's the way this government seems to be running its business: telling people one thing, doing another and then hoping no one looks behind the curtain to see if they are telling the truth.

To that end, I can understand why Mr. Hampton's opposition day resolution number 2 leads off, "That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its promises to Ontario children." I think that is telling. As opposition members as well, we find it is imperative to continue to remind this government to basically do what they said they were going to do. It's really that simple.

Very recently, in my neck of the woods in rural Ontario, people are disenfranchised and really disappointed that this government has turned its back on rural Ontario. Over the last few weeks, we have heard so much about money ostensibly allocated through the CRF. You check the figures and discover it's not there. We've heard this again and again: Brant county took a hit, Elgin county, Norfolk had a decrease of \$7.3 million, Oxford, tobacco towns like Tillsonburg. These communities were promised \$15 million by this government. Two weeks later, \$15.6 million was subtracted. This is how this particular government treats its promises.

Thank you for the time, Speaker.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** I'm very pleased to rise today to speak on the many new initiatives and programs that this government has introduced over the past 18 months. We understand that our greatest asset is and will continue to be the children of Ontario, and that is why we are working very hard to address the many issues that involve children.

One of the things that I feel we—all Ontarians—should be so proud of is that we have created the

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the first new ministry in 20 years. I could go on and on about what we have done as a government—and I will—but I just want to give you a few examples from my riding of Huron–Bruce.

We have introduced Best Start. It's a plan for healthy development, early learning and child care during the child's first years. Best Start is an integrated approach that is seamless from the child's and family's perspective, and that brings together pre-school, JK, SK and quality child care; public health; parenting programs; and linkages to many other children's services. The investment of \$58 million in 2004-05 is the first boost to child care in over a decade. It represents a real commitment to early learning. Four thousand new subsidized child care spaces were created. In the riding of Huron–Bruce, Huron county received \$215,600 and Bruce county received \$243,100.

The member mentioned rural communities. We often have a few more difficulties providing the types of services that are needed by our people, so integrated services work very well in our communities.

The province invests funds available from the national child benefit in services and programs for children, including \$20 million in the four-point plan for children's mental health and \$22 million in children's treatment centres. Municipalities also invest available funds in programs like Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, Ontario Works child care, and Learning, Earning and Parenting.

Simply put, we are providing programming to working families and the most vulnerable from the funds available through the NCB. One of the programs that is offered in Huron county is called Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, and part of the funding comes from the national child benefit supplement. Among the things it covers off are employment maintenance—emergency transportation, minor car repairs—eyeglasses, emergency dental care and emergency child care. It also helps with families: emergency diapers, formula, breast pump rental, infant car seats and emergency homemaking. These are the types of services that are available from the NCB fund in Huron county.

In Bruce county, Bruce Grey Children's Services is another organization in my riding. They offer services for children including mental health services, resources for expectant and new mothers and Early Years centres. These types of programs are vital to our communities.

As well, I want to talk about the free vaccinations for children against pneumonia, chicken pox and meningitis. It's a saving for families of \$600 per child. We have invested \$4 million more for student nutrition programs, bringing the total to \$8.5 million per year. We have provided the first significant increase for children's mental health services in over 12 years. In my riding of Huron–Bruce, this represents an increase of \$308,139 in Bruce Grey Children's Services and \$251,943 for the Huron-Perth Centre for children and youth. At the Huron Safe Homes for Youth, it represents an additional \$25,000. I can tell you that this money will certainly be put to good use in the riding of Huron–Bruce.

1630

Unlike the previous government, we have a plan for school-aged children with autism over the age of six. There are more services now than there have ever been. We have made significant progress in just one year. As of April 1, 2005, we have reduced the waiting list for assessment by 72%.

I know that a number of members from the government want to speak today, but it is certainly my pleasure to rise and talk about the initiatives that we have done. We will continue to work diligently on behalf of the children and families from all of the ridings within Ontario.

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke–Lakeshore):** I'm pleased to take an opportunity to respond to the opposition day motion this afternoon.

When I travel through my own community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, one of things that comes across loud and clear from the children's agencies that I have the privilege of representing is that they understand that after years of inaction from a provincial government, with this government, with our Liberal government, children and youth are on the agenda for the very first time in many, many years. Those children and youth have a voice in government like never before. They have a Premier who is so committed to the issue of giving children and youth across Ontario a voice that when he was sworn in, 18 months ago now, one of the first official decisions that was made was to create a new ministry dedicated to children and youth, making sure that Ontario's children and youth are very much on the agenda, helping our government set a path to help Ontario's children achieve the best they can, from before they are born until they are through their school years. Those are the things I want to focus on a little bit.

I recently had an opportunity in my own community to speak to families who depend on an agency called Next Door Family Resources. When I was visiting Next Door Family Resources, I had a chance to talk to them about the new Best Start program, a comprehensive plan that will help kids be ready to start school. It will establish a full day of learning for our four- and five-year olds. When those families in the audience had an opportunity to hear about what the government is doing, I can tell you they too agreed that children and youth are on the government's agenda.

We acknowledge that we can't remedy the disaster we were left with after 10 years of neglect of children and youth issues, but we are moving progressively on many, many fronts. In the short time that I have today I won't even be able to review all the areas where we have seen progress, but I want to highlight some of those areas that were the most significant to families in my own community.

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children: We're investing an additional \$8.3 million to improve access to infant screening programs for more young children. We're investing an additional \$4.7 million in the preschool speech and language program and \$1.2 million in the infant hearing program to improve access to hearing, speech and language programs for more young children.



When I had an opportunity again to go to another wonderful agency in my community that helps children, Lamp Community Health Centre, which has an Early Years centre in it, I talked to the parents who were there with their children, and asked them, "What does this hearing program mean to you? What does it mean, as a young mother, to be able to come in and have your baby's hearing tested? What does the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program mean?" They told us that this program was important to them. It indicated to them that the government was a partner in raising their children. We've heard many sayings about, "It takes a village to raise children." Well, I can tell you, it takes a government that is committed to helping parents across this province raise their children into healthy adults. That's what our government is doing, each and every day, in a variety of areas.

To have statements made that our Premier is not committed to this issue, when he has put a minister who—last week I had an opportunity to speak to Minister Dryden, who is so committed to this issue. He sang her praises. He said, "There could be nobody better at the table helping me, working with me, to ensure that we get this national child care program."

Ontario is leading the way with the three sites that are coming on board and with the wraparound systems. For those families in our province who have had the benefit of having wraparound day care in a school, to help them in the busy lives that they have trying to raise their children, it is critical. My own sister has benefited in raising her children through wraparound child care. She could not have been able to raise wonderful children, pursue her career and live a balanced life without the support that she has received from wraparound child care.

Shouldn't every parent in this province have access to that kind of support? Our government says they should, and we are moving forward each and every day to make sure. We're going to build our pilot projects. We would have loved to put one in every community across the province, but we are not able to move that quickly on all fronts. We're going to start three pilot projects with a goal to provide child care in this province like never before.

One of the other areas that is significant in my own community—there are some wonderful agencies doing work in this field—is children's mental health. Children's mental health, unfortunately, has been very far off the radar screen for the last 10 years. We have seen now a 3% increase in funding for children's mental health agencies to retain and recruit staff. In January 2005, in Toronto alone, \$1.9 million went to 63 agencies, and \$13 million went to create 113 new children's mental health programs and expand 96 existing programs across the province. Some of those programs operate every day, assisting those children and youth in our communities who need help the most.

I want to recognize the good work done by the agencies in my own community, Etobicoke. The Etobicoke

Children's Centre—trauma-based treatment and training—received an additional \$50,000, a recognition of the importance of this for the first time in many years. Toronto Child Abuse Centre received an additional \$86,000. The George Hull Centre, a wonderful organization in Etobicoke, received an additional \$26,000 for a family conferencing group and an additional \$55,000 for increased services for adolescent and concurrent disorders.

Over the years, I've had a chance to learn a lot about the financial difficulties that the George Hull Centre had been through with the previous government. Let me tell you, it was a real benefit to see that agency receive support. They very much appreciated the fact that our government cares about children whom previous governments, frankly many governments, have not really cared about, because they are potentially those children who are difficult to deal with—difficult issues. But those children are not going to be forgotten by this government.

Other children who will not be forgotten by this government are those who require our protection. I had the privilege of being with Minister Bountrogianni when she announced the closure of the Toronto Youth Assessment Centre in my community, which was an unsuitable and unsafe institution for our youth in this province. Now we are moving forward again to protect those youth who are at risk and who are most vulnerable, creating a new GTA youth centre to ensure community safety and provide appropriate youth programming.

The day I walked through TYAC with the minister was a difficult day, I can tell you. It was difficult to watch the type of environment that these youth were in, these young adults whom we want to see get out of this institution at some point and become adults who are able to prosper in our society. It was not suitable. It was a proud day that our government finally moved on the closure of this facility. Again, that's another program in Etobicoke.

I am proud to say that this government is committed to ensuring the protection of children and youth. With that, I'm pleased to cede the floor to my colleagues, because there is so much more we can say to indicate the commitment of this government to protect children and youth in our province and to ensure their prosperity in years to come.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate. I had two stand up at the same time. The member for Hamilton East.

1640

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I thought I would start by reiterating the motion, particularly the piece of the motion that I'm going to be speaking to, because I think it's extremely specific and extremely important:

"Opposition Day Number 2

"Mr. Hampton

"That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its promises to Ontario children...."—and I'm going to speak to this section—"Regarding early learning and child care: 'We are com-

mitting \$300 million in new provincial money for Best Start.' 'We will spend the money offered by the federal Liberals on regulated, centre-based child care.'"

I thought it was pretty obvious that the speakers from the government side have done us a great favour. They clearly, in their rhetoric, indicated that they can't speak to that motion because, guess what? They are not doing what they said they were going to do. They are not spending the \$300 million that they said they were going to spend, and that's the bottom line. What I would like to do is talk about why it's important that they actually live up to their commitment, that the McGuinty Liberals actually do what they said they were going to do and start dealing with, in a real and tangible way, the child care issues of the families in this province.

Did you know that there are 1,944,400 children in the province of Ontario under the age of 12? Did you know that almost 70% of those children—it's a staggering number, almost 70% of the children under 12 in this province, 1,325,400 children—have mothers who are in the workforce in Ontario? In fact, the number of children needing child care since 1995 has increased by 75,400. However—and this is the disturbing issue and the reason why it is extremely important that the government live up to its promise—only 25,045 spaces have been created since 1995, which means that there is a huge gap between the need for regulated child care spaces and the number that are being provided in Ontario. That is the crux of the matter. There are 91% of children under 12 in Ontario who cannot access regulated child care spaces. In this day and age, in the year 2005, that's absolutely unacceptable and absolutely inappropriate, particularly when, well into its term of office, the government that promised to address this very travesty has not done so, has not done what it said it was going to do in regard to providing regulated child care in the province.

I spent some time recently, at the beginning of March, in my home community of Hamilton talking to people who had come out to have a public meeting about the child care issue. It was a meeting that was organized by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, and there were women there who had been fighting for and advocating for a system of early learning and care in the province of Ontario since the 1980s, people like a woman named Lesley Russell, people like Dr. Jean Clinton, people like Inez Rios, who is the executive director of our immigrant women's centre in Hamilton, people like LaFerne Clarke from family services, people like Laurie Jeandron. Those are the people in Hamilton. And I know that this coalition went across the province talking to community after community after community about the concerns they had about the lack of regulated, affordable, not-for-profit child care, quality child care and early learning in their communities.

The people who showed up in Hamilton were women who work in this field. Some of them were women who were training in this field, early childhood education at Mohawk College. These are women who are passionate about their field, passionate about children, passionate

about providing the very important, integral part of the development of children from the very early ages. They were women, in fact, who want to stay in that field over the long term. But they were also women who wanted to make sure that in participating in that field, they would be receiving the kind of remuneration that they deserve for providing that very, very important service. They were people who were talking about how important it is to make sure that they were able to continue to learn and grow within their field and provide the necessary input and education and support and developmental programs for children in their very early years. In fact, these were women who were very, very hopeful that this government and this minister would take up the challenge and be a true leader in the child care fight for families and children in Ontario. They are women who are experts in the field. They are people who know the research. They are people who have studied the models and who are very well versed in the options and opportunities before us at this historic time.

Of course, that's all relative to what's happening on the federal scene, but that's another story. These are women, within this context, who were bitterly disappointed a few short weeks later when they found out that the minister had been stringing them along for all this time. They were bitterly disappointed to find out that they had been misled for months because the test of integrity, once again, was failed by the McGuinty government. In true McGuinty Liberal form, the minister broke her promise to children, to families and to the child care community.

I can say this with authority, because the minister in fact was provided with an outline of the problems in her purported plan. I don't quite see it as a plan. It's so long-term that it can't be called a plan; it's so nebulous that you can't even refer to it as a plan. I would think that "plan" in the dictionary would be more succinct than what this minister has offered with regard to a child care program for Ontario. It's very saddening indeed, because the minister spent much time in this very chamber, and with the media, I might add, in Ontario, with the press gallery touting her plan, only for all of us to find out that we were duped. The minister was reminiscent of the famous children's novel of the emperor who had no clothes. I have to say that that was quite a disappointing time.

What's wrong with what is being called the Best Start program? The bottom line is that it's a non-starter, and that's the first critical problem. The minister said that the program she was putting forward was going to be a seamless service, that it would be a seamless program. But the fundamental flaw is that the minister doesn't get the fact that we're talking about early learning and care. When you talk about a seamless program, you're talking about the fact that integrated into your program is the acknowledgement that early learning, that learning, is a basis for everything going forward from age zero. What we have is a minister who has put forward a plan that deals with a system that does not recognize that basic



principle. That is an extremely major problem with the very premise of what she put forward in her Best Start program. Basically, it perpetuates the separation between learning and care, and that is a fundamental flaw.

There are a number of other problems. I'm going to review them one by one, hopefully leaving quite a bit of time for my colleague, who has other issues to discuss in regard to this motion.

Best Start does not commit to the fundamental issue of universality. For New Democrats that is extremely important, and people who are very involved in child care programs would agree that universality is a fundamental requirement. This program does not commit to that, and that is a travesty. Best Start is silent on early learning and care needs of children under the age of 12, and that's very interesting, because the minister brags about her program but refuses to acknowledge that, except for a couple of pilot projects, she has totally ignored everyone from ages zero to four, and from age six and over. How is this a program for children in Ontario universally when from zero to 12 it's not? It's a program at this point, at the very, very best for a few kids ages four and five, maybe sometime in 2007 if it actually gets implemented. That's a problem.

1650

There are many problems. The minister refuses to commit to two fundamental concerns. One is for expansion only in the not-for-profit sector, which again is a fundamentally important issue. Research shows time and again that the highest quality, best bang for your buck is not-for-profit, and this minister refuses to make that commitment. Also, the plan that was brought forward by the minister, the nebulous piece of a plan she brought forward, does not at all talk about the QUAD principles, which should be the building blocks to any child care program, whether that's the national program or the provincial program. The QUAD principles—quality, universality, accessibility and developmental—must be up front and centre in any program. The minister has not done that.

These things cause great concern in the child care community. These are the reasons—as well as the fact that this government has refused to invest the dollars they said they were going to invest—that we have put this motion forward today. We need the government to live up to its promises and do the right thing by the children of Ontario.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to join in this debate. I want to say at the outset that I will be voting in support of this motion put forward by Mr. Hampton for a very clear reason. The motion reads, "That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its promises to Ontario children." Speaker, I'm sure you would agree with me that this government has a reputation for not keeping its promises. Whether it is to children, to seniors, to businesses or to the social service sector, there is such an incredible track record of broken promises and broken trust by this Premier and by this government. I believe this debate

gives us an opportunity to make it very clear to people in this province just what the impact of those broken promises is, and how empty so much of the rhetoric we get from this government really is, how hollow many of the words we hear from cabinet ministers and from this Premier really are.

We heard, even in this debate, in the response from one of the members of the government, how this government takes pride in the fact that they have created a new ministry for children and youth. Yet when we look at the record, we see that this new ministry is really simply one new bureaucratic way of sidestepping the responsibilities this government has to children in this province, one more minister to write one more letter that does not address the issue when there is an appeal by parents, whether it's for autism or other issues. So the creation of a ministry is not the answer; the answer is to respond in a practical way to the promises made to the children of this province.

For the record, I want to read a portion of a letter that was sent by Dalton McGuinty. It was dated September 17, 2003. It was addressed to Ms. Morrison, and it reads as follows: "Sadly, as you and many other Ontario families are experiencing first-hand, far too few autistic children in our province are getting the help and support they so desperately need." He says, "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six." He goes on to say, "In government, my team"—this is the team we are now listening to today justifying why they are not doing what Dalton McGuinty said he was going to do—"and I will work with clinical directors, parents, teachers and school boards to devise a feasible way in which autistic children in our province can get the support and treatment they need. That includes children over the age of six."

It's signed, "Dalton McGuinty, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party." That's the same Dalton McGuinty who today is the Premier and has his team, his team that is now refusing to live up to those promises that were made.

I have had—as I'm sure every member of this House has—visits over the last number of months and years from parents of autistic children who are simply asking for one thing, and that is that their children be given an opportunity to grow and develop. It's not as though this is new treatment; it's not as though a treatment is not available; it is. It's being delivered.

I'm proud of the fact that our government was the first government to actually introduce formal treatment into the province of Ontario for children with autism, paid for by the government of Ontario. It started off with a \$5-million investment, increased by another \$35 million, increased by millions more. It was a beginning. It was an important start.

What parents are asking now is for Dalton McGuinty, who, when he was wanting to be Premier, made a promise to them—not a conditional promise. His letter did not say, "depending on what the books of the

province are; depending on whether or not we can afford this"; he clearly made the statement that this was a priority for him and it would be a priority for this government. He made the statement that he and his team will provide treatment to children with autism beyond the age of six. As the official opposition, we are today calling on the Premier of this province, on the government of the day, to keep his promises.

I found it shocking that in this very Legislature, just last week, when the Premier was put a question in this House by Ms. Churley, he did not hesitate at all. There was no equivocation at all about his response. I want you to contrast this question with the question that is being put to him through this motion. The question Ms. Churley put to him—and this is regarding the issue of sexual reassignment surgery, whether government would fund a sex-change operation. Ms. Churley said this: "I ask you, if the tribunal rules in favour of reinstating funding, will you ensure that your government respects the ruling and reinstate the funding immediately after that ruling?" Mr. McGuinty responded this way: "I want to be very, very direct to the member's question: Yes."

Isn't it interesting that he is very quick to say yes in response to that question, but when the Superior Court of Ontario directs this same government, this same Premier, to provide funding for autistic children, he has refused to even answer that question in this place? He doesn't have the moral courage to stand in this place and respond; the best he can do is refer the question to his Attorney General. This is cowardice at its worst, it is immoral and it shows a bankruptcy on the part of this government, not in terms of finances but in terms of moral fibre and character.

So I call on Premier McGuinty, on this government, to simply do what he said he would do: honour his commitment. That's why I will be voting for this motion.

1700

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** I welcome the opportunity to make a few comments today on the opposition day motion that we are debating. I think that one of the important things about this particular opposition motion is that, as it characterizes the government, it provides an opportunity for us to look at some of the enemies of democracy. I think that the two most important for all people in today's society are cynicism and apathy. What we are looking at today provides an example that can be used to demonstrate that both of these, cynicism and apathy, will grow with the kind of criticism that is inherent in this motion.

We know that apathy grows out of a sense of confusion, a sense of conflict, and from that develops a sense of incompetence. When you look at the kinds of things that are built into this motion, I think it's obvious that the public is going to feel the kind of turnoff, the kind of response that we know comes out of the confusion that develops that apathy.

In the same way, we can talk about the cynicism that is also inherent in the issues raised by this motion. Cynicism is going to happen when government doesn't

do what it says it will do, when it doesn't live up to the promises it makes. We are certainly very much aware of the kind of record that this government has made for itself. It has broken many, many promises.

I think it's important to understand how that connection is made and what effect it has on voter apathy and voter cynicism. We know that, at the time of the campaign in 2003, the Premier—at that point the leader—indicated that he would not raise taxes. This is something that obviously was a key message for voters. Voters want to know that they can expect to have a certain style of government, and they make decisions based on the kinds of things that are brought forward during a campaign.

I don't think that people had any idea of the speed with which those promises would be broken. Certainly the one that stands out in the area of taxes is the so-called health tax. At first, the government tried to present this as a health premium, but we all know that it was neither health nor premium; it was a tax. Given that it is not designated to the health budget—it is part of the government's revenue—we have here a clear indication of the fact that the government, in its infancy, broke one of the foundations of its platform.

It's interesting to note too the fact that, because it was such an integral part of the government's position, it was one of the events that the now Premier made a great public display of. It's interesting to look at the fact that, with some flourish, McGuinty signed the written pledge during the 2003 election campaign as he stood with the president of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, John Williamson, who signed as a witness. This wasn't something that was treated as an off-the-cuff, not-thought-out position; in fact, it was one that clearly the now government regarded as an important key in their election platform. But very quickly, it was gone, the same as hydro rates, again a commitment the now government made. So people began to have that kind of disillusionment, which does go to the issues of apathy and cynicism.

The now Premier also made a commitment—it is one of the key foundations of the motion we are debating here—in a letter that was dated September 17, 2003, in which he identified the importance of IBI treatment. In fact, he said, "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory." But we have seen that when it came to actually providing that care, the government has been unable to provide that and, I would say, has waged war through the courts with the families so affected. Again, I think it is a reflection of the kind of activity by the party in power that goes to the issue of that kind of cynicism.

We also have witnessed the breaking of promises with regard to necessary health care. Ontarians woke up to find that physiotherapy, chiropractic care and optometry were also parts of a disposable platform that the party had campaigned on.

I think we have to take into account, when we are looking at this motion—obviously there are very specific



parts of this motion that reference has been made to, but I think, overall, the important point for people to understand, as voters, is the danger of the kind of government that is unable to meet what it has set forward for itself, in terms of the promises it makes. What this demonstrates is that not only has the government broken many, many of its promises, including the ones listed in this motion, but it has no plan. And this speaks not only to the reaction of voters in being cynical and apathetic, but to the government's incompetence as well.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** Thank you, Speaker.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Flaherty:** I thank the minister of consumer and commercial relations, although they change the names often, so I'm not quite sure—the minister in charge of wine in restaurants.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** And elevators.

**Mr. Flaherty:** Yes, and elevators.

**Mrs. Munro:** Also cemeteries.

**Mr. Flaherty:** And the minister also responsible for cemeteries in Ontario; it's good that he's here.

I'll say a few words about this opposition day motion, particularly with respect to services for vulnerable people—people with disabilities—in the province of Ontario. This is a strange day in Canadian politics, where we have the Prime Minister making some kind of negotiated pact, I understand, with the leader of the New Democratic Party. In fact, the only politician in Canada whom the Prime Minister seems not willing to make a deal with is the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty. We'll see if that happens in the next week or so, as we're into let's-make-a-deal politics, at least at the federal level.

1710

It's about integrity in government, isn't it? This government in Ontario, when it was seeking office, said—the Premier today said that he would keep his commitment to the parents of children with autism, a very serious commitment to make, and an issue that's not without difficulty in the sense that what the parents are seeking has a substantial financial consequence. It costs a significant amount of money to advance this program to an older age group. But the fact is that, in terms of integrity in government, Mr. McGuinty chose to make that commitment, and of course he should keep that commitment.

When I look at some of the other commitments that were made that have been abandoned, the promises that have been broken by Mr. McGuinty, I have less concern, actually, about them than I do about a specific promise like this, with respect to which many parents based their vote. They actually have said that they voted for Mr. McGuinty, that they voted for their local Liberal candidate because of this commitment, which isn't surprising when one thinks about the crisis in families, the deep-felt needs in families, the realistic needs in families with children with significant disabilities and challenges.

In support of this opposition day motion, I urge the government to fulfill that commitment to children with autism and to their parents in Ontario. Promises made, promises broken: This promise should be kept and I urge the government to do that.

There are choices that are made in government, and I would be the first to acknowledge them. When I had the privilege to serve as Minister of Finance, I can remember preparing the budget in 2001. A number of people advocated, in social services certainly, that we should increase the benefit under the Ontario disability support program. Another claim was for children's treatment centres, which had been chronically underfunded to the tune of about \$20 million at that time; for workers who worked with young people and adults with mental disabilities, with intellectual challenges, who had not kept up in their salary grid with persons who worked with other persons with other types of disabilities.

Those were just some of the issues, and we made choices. We provided the additional funding to the 19 children's treatment centres across the province—20 now, I believe. We provided the funding for persons who worked with young people and adults with mental disabilities, and we did not make some other choices, because that's the obligation of government.

I say to my friends opposite that this obligation with respect to this extended treatment program for children with disabilities is fundamentally important, particularly when I look at Ontario's finances and we put in perspective the kind of money that is being talked about here compared to the kind of money that is being spent by this government. In 2001 the spending of the Ontario government was about \$65 billion. We don't know what the spending has been in the past fiscal year; we'll find out when the budget comes forward in the next little while in Ontario. The best guess is that the spending is something in excess of \$80 billion—staggering spending by this government. This is a government that now goes, hat in hand, to Ottawa and says, "Bail us out from our budget challenges in Ontario."

I say to the Liberal government that to be credible they must first get their own fiscal house in order. As they say in law, "He who seeks equity must do equity." Get the spending under control, get on to a plan in the province, and then the supplication to Ottawa will be much more powerful on behalf of the people of Ontario.

It's not clear what the spending increase has been in the past year. We'll know when the budget comes forward. It's at least 6% or 7%, perhaps in excess of 10%. We don't even know. This is in an economy growing at 2.5%, 3% or 3.1%, clearly not sustainable by a provincial government, not sustainable, for that matter, without substantial deficits and increasing public debt by any government.

I urge the members opposite to urge the Minister of Finance and the Premier to bring in a budget in Ontario that has a plan, and then stick to the plan that leads to a balanced budget. That's what happened last year in the budget, in this budget. In the economic statement in fall

2004, on virtually every page there was talk about the four-year economic plan, the fiscal plan for the province of Ontario, "our plan." At some point in here it's called—yes, here it is on page 1. In the first paragraph of the economic statement by the Minister of Finance in the autumn of 2004, he says, "I want to talk about a comprehensive four-year plan." The government, we know, is way off-plan. They are way off-plan on spending, because of ad hoc spending decisions that were not budgeted. They are way off-plan because of settlements that have been reached with public sector workers and broader public sector workers that are in excess of budgeted items.

They are way off-balance on something else too, and that's on the revenue side, because this government brought in the largest single tax hike in the history of the province of Ontario in last year's budget, including substantial corporate tax hikes. We haven't heard it in this place, but the word is out there now in financial circles in Ontario that the revenue from the corporate tax hike anticipated by the Minister of Finance and by the Premier not only has not materialized but is substantial lower. We know why it's substantially lower, because we understand Canada somewhat. We understand that a corporation doing business in various parts of Canada can book profits outside the province of Ontario and pay corporate taxes in another province, and not in this province, totally legally—some would say an intelligent business decision by a corporation.

You'd think the Minister of Finance and the Premier would have picked that up. You'd think they would have come clean already with the people of Ontario about the diminished revenue from anticipated, expected revenues from that corporate tax hike that are not materializing. But we'll hear about that. We'll see that when we see the numbers fairly shortly, I hope, in the budget.

But going back to the basic point of this opposition day motion: I urge the government to keep this promise to parents of children with autism in this province. At least keep this pledge. It's the decent thing to do out of respect for the lives and the challenges of these parents and these children in Ontario.

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** Notwithstanding the sometimes acerbic tone that's around this discussion, I'm always really gratified and pleased when the discussion in this House focuses on something very substantive, and children are number one on my hit parade.

One of the things that we cannot emphasize enough, first and foremost, is that this government spoke volumes about its consideration of children, the importance of children, the importance of nurturing children and providing them the best we could provide them with, when we created the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. For the first time in this province there is a ministry, an entire ministry, dedicated to children and youth services. I think it also has to be said that the selection of the minister for that ministry was particularly brilliant. Dr. Marie Bountrogianni grew up above a child care centre.

Her mother was in child care. She is a child psychologist. She worked for the school boards for many, many years. She had a dream all those years when she was in the school boards, and that dream was to create the best possible start for young children so that they would have the support and the nurturing and the early learning they needed to set themselves up for life. She has been put into a position where she can achieve that dream, realize that dream.

This is where I felt a little bit like I was in the twilight zone for a minute: I was at the launch of the Best Start program a month ago or so and I heard first-hand, in a room filled with early childhood educators and school board officials and children's aid officials, the details of what the Best Start program was all about. I've heard in this House a little earlier that we weren't delivering on all sorts of issues, when clearly the Best Start program delivers in an historic way in this province. For the first time in this province there is a program for young children, early learning that nurtures them and takes into consideration a whole range of issues that families face.

#### 1720

First of all, I want to talk about the fact that this fall, junior and senior kindergarten children will have access to an affordable, quality early learning program that will wrap around their school day. It will be in the school setting or very nearby. That's sensible, because parents want to go to a place that's close or where they have other children. It's a little more convenient: They can drop off their older school-aged children as well as the younger ones. If parents are working, there is an arrangement that those children will be moved back to the school setting and back to the child care setting. It's a pretty sensible thing; it's creating hubs.

Over the next 10 years, that program is going to be expanded to include a half day of learning for children as young as two and a half years old, again largely in the school setting where it's easiest for the parents. There is also going to be a wide range of supports for parents and their younger children, like ongoing screening for newborns, an 18-month well baby checkup and early identification of hearing and language needs.

They've also set up three demonstration sites. Three areas in the province will get the entire Best Start program right away, so that the province can assess the success of the program and fine-tune it before rolling it out all over the province. One of those areas, I'm delighted to say, takes in part of my riding and part of Hamilton East, and it will service those kids. So they are going to get the full program right away. It's just economically sensible that you do have demonstration sites where you can assess the success of a program and fine-tune it before you spend the money rolling it out all over the place. That's sensible. It's nice to talk about what we should all be doing, but it's also really sensible to talk about what we can do and get on with doing it. That's exactly what has happened here.

I want to take a look at a couple of the quotes I've heard. The day in my riding when they were unveiling



the Best Start program, I heard nothing but accolades and the atmosphere was absolutely jubilant. I'm going to read some of the quotes from that day.

First of all, from Margaret McCain, who is the co-author of the 1999 Ontario Early Years report: "This program is a fulfillment of everything we envisioned in 1998 with our Early Years Study. This was our vision and hope for Ontario, and indeed Canada."

From Jane Bertrand, who is at the Atkinson Centre, human development and applied psychology, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, OISE: "The framework is there for transformation to happen. This is the best thing that has happened since McCain and Mustard issued their Ontario Early Years Study, 1999. Finally, the key recommendations of their report are on the road to being implemented."

From Rick Johnson, association president, Ontario Public School Boards' Association: "The Ontario Public School Boards' Association applauds the provincial government's announcement on early learning and child care that is based on the four key principles of quality, universality, accessibility and development. We welcome the opportunity to work with Minister Bountrogianni and the provincial government to ensure that this investment in our children during their early years will form for them the foundation of a healthy and successful life."

From David Miller, mayor of the city of Toronto: "We're pleased that the province is listening to what Toronto and other cities have said about child care and early learning."

From Sue Makin, healthy families director, child health, city of Toronto: "Public Health absolutely supports the integrated service approach in the Best Start plan. Public Health is particularly pleased that this government has included Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, preschool speech and language, infant hearing and the 18-month screen as part of their integrated service approach. Bravo, Dr. Bountrogianni!"

From Mary Jean Gallagher, director, Greater Essex County District School Board: "This is a comprehensive plan to develop a stimulating learning environment that will prepare children for learning. It levels the playing field for all children and will provide a one-stop point for preschool children."

Finally, Jean Clinton, who is a child psychiatrist and somebody who has studied these issues tremendously, and is a great champion of the Reggio Emilia model, which is internationally renowned, says of the Best Start plan that was announced by this government: "This is a huge support for parents.... It's so exciting because the overall vision would be that all children have the right to the environment they need for full growth."

There are more quotes that I could go on and read. So I'm a little confused when I hear we're not delivering on a promise, when we clearly are delivering on a promise, and delivering what is historic in nature. This has never happened before.

I'm just going to go over a few more points so we're absolutely clear. In addition to this, we've also created

4,000 new subsidized child care spaces. We've made more families eligible for child care subsidies by eliminating restrictions on RRSPs and RESPs. We're investing an additional \$8.3 million in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program to improve access to the infant screening program for more young children. We're investing an additional \$4.7 million in the preschool speech and language program, and \$1.2 million in the infant hearing program to improve that situation.

So it's all here. I think it's a great program. No, we're not going to do it all overnight, but we have a very clear plan. Everything is there. Stakeholders are being consulted. They're cheering us on wildly, and I think that speaks volumes.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak to this opposition day motion. I'd like to begin by spending a bit of time on the autism issue and what we found when we came into office.

The Tories had agreed to fund an IBI treatment program for preschool autistic children; that is, up to age six. Interestingly, I was rather surprised when I heard the comments from the member for Oak Ridges, who seemed to be saying that he now opposed this, because it was actually the Tories who, based on some research, originally opposed the cut-off age of six and entered into the court case over this issue. So I was a little bit surprised by the comments from the member for Oak Ridges. Nevertheless, we found there was an IBI program that was met with great favour by the parents of preschool autistic children; in fact, there was a significant waiting time for this program.

When you look at what the Provincial Auditor had to say, because the Provincial Auditor took a close look at this program, he found that what we ran into was a huge waiting list both for assessment and treatment, and that this was a very costly program. Depending on the region, it cost as much as \$100,000 per child to deliver this program. So things were not all happy when we came in.

I think it's worthwhile to tell folks a little bit about the program. IBI stands for intensive behavioural intervention. It's a one-to-one therapy and typically goes on for 20 to 40 hours per week. This is a very intensive therapy, although interestingly, the providers only require about two weeks of training. It's a very intensive therapy, and thereby the reason it is very expensive.

This is a subset of a larger group of treatments known as ABA, or applied behaviour analysis. The terminology gets a little bit confusing here. The other thing that gets a little bit lost here sometimes is that not all autistic children benefit from this program. There are some children who certainly benefit from this therapy, but there are other children who are also autistic who quite frankly don't particularly qualify, because autism is a whole spectrum, a whole range of services.

It's interesting; I had a family in my office not too long ago who have two autistic children, and they said to me, "You know, Liz, the older child who is autistic is quite high-functioning. We understand that IBI is not an

appropriate intervention for our older son who is autistic. There are some interventions that would be very helpful to our older son, but those interventions aren't available in Guelph. If I lived in Waterloo, I could get those interventions, but because I live in Guelph, I can't get that treatment. The treatment that my older autistic child needs isn't available."

The other thing they noted, though, was that they had a younger autistic child, and this child was quite different. The younger child, the three-year-old, in fact would benefit greatly from IBI treatment. The treatment that this child requires might be available eventually, but this child is on a very long waiting list.

1730

It was interesting what those parents said to me. They said, "Liz, we fully support you in ending this service at age six, because we understand that what we need to provide as a province is a range of services for autistic children so that both of our children can benefit. We understand that what we need, according to the research, is effective IBI intervention for our three-year-old now, not our six-year-old later. So we support what you're doing."

In fact, we've done quite a lot on this file. First of all, we have made significant progress in just one year. As of April 1, 2005, we have reduced the waiting list for assessment, which was a significant issue according to the Provincial Auditor, by 72%. We've hired over 110 new therapists, and because of that we've increased the number of children receiving IBI services by over 25% and therefore reduced the waiting time for this service. We've doubled the number of transition coordinators from 13 to 26 to help children move on, and we've also introduced a new program in schools which provides autism experts on every board to make sure that we can provide service to school-aged children.

Just before I wrap up, I'd like to quote briefly a few of the experts. World-renowned autism expert Peter Szatmari, who is the acting director at the Offord Centre for Child Studies, a highly respected centre in the area of special-needs children, said, "It's a significant and positive step in the right direction."

Gordon Floyd, executive director for Children's Mental Health Ontario, said, "I am in complete support of this program. The minister clearly understands the challenges facing children, youth and their families living with autism."

I am voting against this motion because we are producing great programming for kids.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? The member for—Burlington. I don't know why that escaped me.

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** You only pass through it on the way to your wonderful riding on almost a daily basis, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I want to thank my colleague for tabling this motion today and providing all of us with an opportunity to participate in an important debate on the future of children's services in this province. I was quite floored by the comments made by the member from Guelph

indicating that she'd be voting against a resolution that asks her to keep her word. I guess that in one fell swoop she has indicated, to her constituents in Guelph at least, that she no longer stands by that and perhaps the more than three election promises which were contained in this resolution and which formed part of the rather lengthy list of 241 promises made by Dalton McGuinty in order to acquire the premiership and the government of Ontario.

I'm very disturbed at the revisionist history coming from the member from Guelph, given the fact that our government did bring in the first major IBI-intensive autism program in Canada. We're very proud of that. I've been here 20 years, and no one ever talked about autism 20 years ago. It's a relatively newly identified challenge over the last decade; the science, and therefore the therapies, are rather contemporary. So I was again very disturbed when the member from Guelph read into the record letters of two years ago: comments made by the current minister of children, Ms. Bountrogianni, who in those days actually upheld the science, confirmed the science and tapped upon her vast professional experience as an educator and psychologist with the Hamilton Board of Education as to how important the program was.

Perhaps it's because the member from Guelph was not in the House or not paying attention when I asked that very same minister why she wasn't proceeding based on a court case in this province, saying that we must proceed with autism supports, that in fact the learned judge indicated that it is the sole responsibility of the province of Ontario to provide these services. The minister stood in her place and answered in this House, on the Hansard record of this Legislative Assembly, that she did not believe that the science could uphold the fact that those services are applicable and would have the effect of positive treatment for children past the age of six.

I was absolutely floored by that statement. Here is a learned, degreed child psychologist who was on the record, having read a court transcript that says that it's now the province's responsibility to provide IBI treatment—she now stands in her place and says that this isn't an essential, proven treatment for children in this province, yet she knew that when she and the current Comsoc minister and the Premier himself routinely stood in his place in this House on this side of the House, trotting families and their children through this legislative chamber week after week after week, saying that when he became Premier, he would provide these extended services.

I just marvel at the government members who are prepared to formally declare to the children of this province and their parents that they have no intention of honouring this promise. There has to be a whole series of reasons for that. My colleague Mr. Flaherty has put on the record that it's probably their spending priorities. Three years ago, spending for provincial programs was \$65 million. It's now well over \$80 million, and this is not part of their priorities. What little bit of money that was earmarked for children in the autism program up to



age six is now being siphoned off and redirected to Ontario's Minister of Education, Mr. Gerard Kennedy, who will pick up substantive millions of dollars—not to provide direct services to autistic children, which is the principle we should be keeping our eye on, that we should drive resources to the delivery mechanism to provide the supports to autistic children and their families; no, no. This money is going to assist teachers so they can better cope in a classroom. I know exactly where the money's going to go. It's going to pair up additional teaching assistants to relieve the pressure from teachers in the classroom. That is not IBI, intensive behavioural intervention. That's why it's called an "intervention," because you intervene with the child's regular, integrated program and you provide these services.

I marvel at the way the Liberals are about to abandon not only their promise on autism but also their promise on the national child benefit supplement: to stop the clawback.

If I had more time, I'd love to speak at length about this broken promise on the commitment to day care. In fact, the minister failed to even show up for the Hamilton Coalition for Better Day Care meeting in this chamber two weeks ago, to everyone's disappointment.

**Ms. Martel:** It's a pleasure for me to wrap up on behalf of our party.

This is all about the promise that the Premier made to a number of vulnerable children and their parents. I'm going to deal specifically with autism, and I want to begin by saying that there was a very specific promise.

I want to acknowledge the presence of Nancy Morrison, who's in the gallery today. It was because of her intervention that we now have a copy of the very famous letter and the clear commitment that was made. And let there be no mistake about it: Nancy wrote to the Ontario Liberal Party during the election. She said she was the author of a very substantial e-mail list and wanted to know the political party's position with respect to extending IBI. She made very clear that she was going to post that so that voters like herself could make decisions about who to vote for in the best interest of their kids. That was done on September 8.

1740

We all know what the reply was, but it's worth reading into the record again. September 17, 2003, Mr. McGuinty writes back to Ms. Morrison and says, "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six." And further: "We are not at all confident that the Harris-Eves Conservatives care to devise any innovative solution for autistic children over six—especially those with best-outcome possibilities that might potentially be helped within the school system with especially trained EAs."

So not only were we going to extend IBI past the age of six, but we were going to put it into the schools and use specially trained EAs to support children in school. It's interesting that after the minister and the Premier two

weeks ago tried to refuse to acknowledge that even any kind of promise had been made, we got e-mails from a number of people who had copies of questionnaires and responses from other Liberal candidates, also talking about the very same promise. Of course, we got copies of Michael Bryant who said that, absolutely, we are going to extend this past the age of six, and from the Wayne Arthurs campaign to Ms. Fiala, also that we were going to extend this past the age of six.

We got another one from the Mike Colle campaign to Arthur Lofski saying that, absolutely, "We support extended autism treatment beyond the age of six," that they are not confident with whatever the Tories are doing. Here is another one that came from Kevin Flynn to Cindy Faria, as well saying, absolutely. He said this at an all-candidates meeting, that of course he supported extending it beyond the age of six. He even supported it being covered under OHIP, and he was going to fight for that.

So there is no doubt about the specific election promise. The sad reality is that since that promise was made, this government has done everything in its power to try and avoid keeping the promise.

Now I want to talk about the school support program, because this was the pathetic excuse the minister trotted out as the government's response to extending IBI treatment to kids after six and putting IBI in the schools. The support program is essentially some folks with some kind of qualifications coming and talking to teachers, trying to give teachers some strategy about how to intervene with kids with autism. It has nothing to do with providing IBI in the schools past the age of six, which is what this government promised.

Let me tell you about the reaction of some of the parents to this program. Here is Kim Paulsen who just wrote to Mr. Kennedy on April 18, and said the following:

"These individuals are strictly to 'train the trainer.' Our teachers are extremely overburdened, this is the last thing they need. These individuals are not permitted to work directly with the students with ASD...or interact with the parents.... Please explain to me how this group of trained specialists will be of any benefit to my children?"

"The Toronto District School Board already has an ASD team and once again they are not permitted to work with the student nor interact with the parent. I was refused access to a meeting with the school and the ASD team, even though they were discussing my child."

Here is another one from Tom Barger. He wrote to us on April 6, saying: "I'm not holding out much hope for this program. I've already been cautioned that this is not a service for the kids but a coaching service for the schools.... I'm really looking forward to begging the people who systematically disadvantaged my son with the EIBI program to consult with our school board, which to date has refused all of our offers of assistance, computers, software, offers to pay for training," etc.

Here is a third one from Cynthia Boufford from London. Her son was cut off IBI by this government when he turned six. She says the following: "My interest" in this program "of course stems from the fact that Jordan's needs are not being met in his classroom." On the advice of his professional therapist, "Jordan should have continued IBI therapy and a buddy system should be set up at school to help him learn essential social skills. We requested this and it was denied. IBI is not available to him because there are no trained staff to deliver it. A simple buddy system, immediately denied, would cost absolutely nothing. So much for meeting the needs of students diagnosed with autism.... So Jordan can simply lie on the ground during recess and look up into the clouds, oblivious to his surroundings, shutting everything and everyone out. All the hard work of IBI being wasted as he learns to enjoy slipping away rather than playing with peers.

"Thought you might like to know what McGuinty's autism school program looks like from our perspective. It's nonexistent."

And that is absolutely a fact. It is completely nonexistent, and it certainly doesn't respond to the promise the government made to extend IBI treatment past the age of six and to ensure that EAs were specifically trained to have IBI in the school system.

The government has said, and I heard a number of Liberal members talk about, "Well, maybe there's not too much proof that IBI works after age six." Do you know what? The government, during the Deskin-Wynberg court case, trotted out all kinds of experts, who testified that really you should start the program earlier, and maybe there isn't so much to it if you start it at age six. I can tell you, to her credit, Justice Kiteley dismissed all of that evidence and said very clearly, "I find that the age cut-off reflects and reinforces the stereotype that children with autism over age six are virtually unredeemable." "To deny the plaintiff children the opportunity to have [IBI] after the age of five is to stereotype them, to prejudice them, and to create a disadvantage for them."

What did Justice Kiteley say about this government's program? I think that's worth putting into the record again. Here are some of the findings she makes:

(1) Violation of the children's Charter rights occurred because the government knew by October 2002 that more children were aging out of the IEIP because they turned six than were actually receiving IBI; the government knew that school-aged autistic children were not receiving appropriate special education programs and services in the schools, and yet the government continued to fund a program which only included autistic children aged two to five, including the Liberal government.

(2) The Minister of Education failed to fulfill the statutory duty to ensure that appropriate special education programs and special education services were available to all exceptional pupils without the payment of fees. In particular, the Minister of Education failed to develop policy and give direction to school boards to ensure that IBI services are provided to children of compulsory

school age. Indeed, the actions and inactions of the Ministry of Education and the minister created a policy barrier to the availability of IBI in schools. The absence of IBI means that children with autism are excluded from the opportunity to access learning, with a consequential deprivation of skills, the likelihood of isolation from society and the loss of the ability to exercise the rights and freedoms to which all Canadians are entitled. That's what Justice Kiteley has to say about this government's program for autistic children in Ontario schools.

On the constitutional questions—because I've heard this minister, this Premier and other members say how proud they are of this program—let me tell you what Justice Kiteley found. Justice Kiteley found the following on the constitutional questions:

Does the age criterion in the intensive early intervention program contravene the infant plaintiffs' right under section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on the basis of age? Yes.

If so, is the violation justified under section 1 of the Charter? No.

Do the actions or inactions of the Minister of Education constitute a violation of his duty under subsection 8(3) of the Education Act by failing or refusing to ensure that IBI, speech therapy, occupational therapy and appropriate educational services are provided to children of compulsory school age, in a manner contrary to the infant plaintiffs' rights under section 15 of the charter on the basis of disability? Yes.

This government's program, that they are so proud of, violates the charter rights of autistic children on the basis of age and on the basis of this disability, and you are proud of that? For goodness' sake, give your heads a shake.

Now, after making the promise to extend IBI, this government is going to appeal the ruling of Justice Kiteley, and you are going to spend millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars to fight these parents one more time in court—millions and millions of dollars, I say, that could be spent on their treatment to ensure that they could be contributing members of society. Shame on this government.

The promise of the Premier was clear before the last election, when he was out trolling for votes among these families. He said very clearly that this was discrimination, that a Liberal government would end the discrimination against autistic children over the age of six, that a Liberal government would provide IBI treatment to autistic children over the age of six and that a Liberal government would ensure that funding in the education system was used to train educational assistants to provide IBI in school. It's time for you to live up to your promise. Stop abusing these families. Stop abusing these kids. Do what you promised when you wanted votes from these families.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** It's a pleasure to join the debate at this late date. I don't think we as a government can ever do enough for our children in this province, but I don't think we as a government need to



take lessons from that party or from that party in this regard. You had the opportunity; you did nothing. You had the opportunity; you froze funding to child care centres, and you know it. You are in no position to lecture this government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time for debate has expired.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I also heard some unparliamentary language that I don't appreciate. Nevertheless, we'll deal with the vote.

Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day number 2:

That, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its promises to Ontario children.

Regarding the baby bonus: "We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. The clawback is wrong and we will end it."

Regarding early learning and child care: "We are committing \$300 million in new provincial money for Best Start." "We will spend the money offered by the federal Liberals on regulated, centre-based child care."

Regarding autism treatment: "I believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six." And that the McGuinty government must not appeal the Ontario Superior Court ruling regarding the rights of autistic children to receive this treatment.

Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Martiniuk, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Jackson, Cameron	Munro, Julia
Flaherty, Jim	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Hampton, Howard	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Hardeman, Ernie	Marchese, Rosario	
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pupatello, Sandra
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fonseca, Peter	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Mauro, Bill	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Milloy, John	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Colle, Mike	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wong, Tony C.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Peters, Steve	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 16; the nays are 39.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 27 April 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Community projects in North Bay</b>	
Ms. Smith .....	6625
<b>Tobacco growers</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	6625
<b>Municipal finances</b>	
Ms. Martel .....	6625
<b>Family health teams</b>	
Mr. Hoy .....	6626
<b>Dairy and poultry farmers</b>	
Mr. Hardeman .....	6626
Mrs. Van Bommel .....	6627
<b>Fire in Cobourg</b>	
Mr. Rinaldi .....	6626
<b>Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6626
<b>Children's services</b>	
Mr. Racco .....	6627

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on justice policy</b>	
Mr. Qadri .....	6627
Report adopted .....	6628

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Good Government Act, 2005,</b>	
Bill 190, <i>Mr. Bryant</i>	
Agreed to .....	6628
Mr. Bryant .....	6628
<b>Apprenticeship and Certification Amendment Act, 2005,</b>	
Bill 191, <i>Ms. Scott</i>	
Agreed to .....	6628
Ms. Scott .....	6628

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6628
Agreed to .....	6629

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Electricity supply</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6629
Mr. Barrett .....	6631
Mr. Hampton .....	6631
<b>Beef research facility</b>	
Mr. Peters .....	6630
Mr. Hardeman .....	6631

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Municipal finances</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6632, 6633
Mr. McGuinty .....	6632
Mr. Phillips .....	6633, 6636
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6636
Mr. Barrett .....	6636
<b>Children's services</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6634, 6635
Mr. McGuinty .....	6634
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6635
<b>Autism treatment</b>	
Ms. Martel .....	6636
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6637
<b>Electricity supply</b>	
Mr. Fonseca .....	6637
Mr. Duncan .....	6637
<b>Anaphylactic shock</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	6638
Mr. Smitherman .....	6638
Mr. Duncan .....	6638
<b>National child benefit supplement</b>	
Mr. Prue .....	6638
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6639
<b>Film classification</b>	
Mr. Zimmer .....	6639
Mr. Watson .....	6639
<b>Court security</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6640
Mr. Bryant .....	6640
<b>Child care</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	6640
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6641
<b>Forest industry</b>	
Mr. Mauro .....	6641
Mr. Ramsay .....	6641

## PETITIONS

<b>Frederick Banting homestead</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6641
<b>Post-secondary education</b>	
Mr. Marchese .....	6642
<b>Halton recycling plant</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	6642
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	6642
Mr. Prue .....	6643, 6644
<b>Health care services</b>	
Mr. Ouellette .....	6642
Mr. Prue .....	6643
Ms. Horwath .....	6644

## Anti-smoking legislation

Mr. McNeely .....	6643
Mr. Martiniuk .....	6643
Mr. Wilson .....	6644

## School closures

Mr. Yakabuski .....	6644
---------------------	------

## OPPOSITION DAY

### Children's services, opposition day number 2, *Mr. Hampton*

Mr. Hampton .....	6645
Mr. Prue .....	6646
Ms. Di Cocco .....	6647
Mr. Barrett .....	6649
Mrs. Mitchell .....	6649
Ms. Broten .....	6650
Ms. Horwath .....	6651
Mr. Klees .....	6653
Mrs. Munro .....	6654
Mr. Flaherty .....	6655
Ms. Mossop .....	6656
Mrs. Sandals .....	6657
Mr. Jackson .....	6658
Ms. Martel .....	6659
Mr. Flynn .....	6660
Negated .....	6661

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

Mr. Kormos .....	6632
------------------	------

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 27 avril 2005

## RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

### Comité permanent de la justice

M. Qadri .....	6627
Rapport adopté .....	6628

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

### Loi de 2005 sur la saine gestion publique, projet de loi 190,

<i>M. Bryant</i>	
Adoptée .....	6628

### Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi sur l'apprentissage et la reconnaissance professionnelle, projet de loi 191, *M<sup>me</sup> Scott*

Adoptée .....	6628
---------------	------



220N  
23



No. 136B

N° 136B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 27 April 2005**

**Mercredi 27 avril 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 April 2005

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 avril 2005

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### MANDATORY GUNSHOT WOUNDS REPORTING ACT, 2005 LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DÉCLARATION OBLIGATOIRE DES BLESSURES PAR BALLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 110, An Act to require the disclosure of information to police respecting persons being treated for gunshot wounds / Projet de loi 110, Loi exigeant la divulgation à la police de renseignements en ce qui concerne les personnes traitées pour blessure par balle.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** On the last occasion, I was in my chair and I was the last speaker, so there will be no questions and comments.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** No. Don't be so harsh.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm going to be harsh; there will be no questions and comments.

Before we go on, I would like to welcome the Pathfinders and Girl Guides from Barrie and Markham.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Howdy, Pathfinders.

**The Acting Speaker:** No playing to the audience.

Further debate? Is there any further debate? There being no further debate, Mr. Kwinter has moved second reading of Bill 110, an act relating to gunshot wounds.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There being more than five members, call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** There won't be a 30-minute bell.

**The Acting Speaker:** There will not be a 30-minute bell.

I have here a letter to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that a vote on the motion by Mr. Kwinter for second reading of Bill 110, An Act to require the disclosure of information to police respecting persons being treated for gunshot wounds, be deferred until April 28, 2005, at the time set aside for such a vote."

It is signed by Dave Levac, chief government whip.

Is there any other business before the House?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** There is a motion for adjournment of the House. Is it agreed? Agreed.

This House will stand adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1848.*

## CONTENTS

Wednesday 27 April 2005

### SECOND READINGS

<b>Mandatory Gunshot Wounds Reporting Act, 2005, Bill 110, <i>Mr. Kwinter</i></b>	
Vote deferred.....	6663

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 27 avril 2005

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2005 sur la déclaration obligatoire des blessures par balle, projet de loi 110, <i>M. Kwinter</i></b>	
Vote différé .....	6663





No. 137

N° 137

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 28 April 2005

Jeudi 28 avril 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 April 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 avril 2005

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### EASTERN ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LE FONDS DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Sterling moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 187, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corporation / Projet de loi 187, Loi créant la Société de gestion du Fonds de développement économique de l'Est de l'Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Sterling, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** This bill tries to establish an economic development fund for eastern Ontario, eastern Ontario being defined as all of that area east of the region of Durham, roughly speaking, all the way to the Quebec border, save and except for the city of Ottawa; it cuts out the city of Ottawa. I will explain to members and to the public why that is necessary to do. The fact of the matter is that the city of Ottawa, which contains half of my riding, has done quite well over the last two decades, since I started representing that area, while the rest of eastern Ontario has not benefited from the growth our economy has seen and has some unique characteristics that are very similar to northern Ontario.

This fund would be created like the northern Ontario heritage fund, which we established by legislation in this Legislature some time ago. The northern Ontario heritage fund has about \$60 million per year to spend in northern Ontario to help municipalities' economic development through direct grants to new businesses that might go into northern Ontario. It helps business associations establish economic opportunity in their area. The ambit of the northern Ontario heritage fund and that of the eastern Ontario economic development fund would be similar in that it would have quite a wide scope in terms of what it could do for this very unique part of Ontario.

This part of Ontario, which I have driven through, back and forth, along Highway 7 from Ottawa to Toronto

on many, many occasions, comprises what I would describe as probably some of the most scenic, most beautiful country in Ontario, but it's also very, very harsh. It's the Precambrian Shield, which sort of wraps from the south of Ottawa all the way around, through Peterborough and of course up north.

It's very difficult in these areas to provide some of the infrastructure we need for our population. The areas cover a population of approximately 900,000 people, very similar to population numbers to the north, which has about 850,000 people.

Two organizations have risen out of the eastern Ontario community, and both organizations have expressed support for this bill even though they did not know about it until two weeks ago. I refer to the Municipalities United for a New Deal, which includes the cities of Peterborough, Prince Edward, Belleville, Quinte West, Kingston, Brockville, Pembroke and Cornwall. I have received an endorsement of this legislation from the mayors of the two largest municipalities, Kingston and Peterborough. There is another organization called the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, which I would characterize as representing the smaller towns and rural areas of eastern Ontario encompassed by the scope and breadth of this bill.

We all know, and I want to try to illustrate, the problems this kind of fund may address. Last Thursday night I was in the town of Lanark, which is about 20 kilometres from the town of Perth. This is a small town of about 450 homes. They don't have sewer and water in that area. I believe there is a significant health risk to the residents there. They should have had sewer and water 20 or 30 years ago, but for some reason, as we went down the path, it never happened. It never happened primarily because there was never enough wealth in the community to make it happen, and they face the same problem today as they did then. A new system would cost about \$18 million to put in, and even if they were lucky enough to get, under the new federal-provincial program—I believe it's COMRIF. That program provides one third federal funding, one third provincial funding, and it is expected that one third would be raised locally.

In my example, it would mean that each household would be required to come up with about \$15,000; that would be the capital cost of putting this system forward. It would probably end up even higher than that when you look at the difficult topography of that town. The Clyde River runs through it, so there are significant problems in crossing that river and dealing with people and homes on both sides. But the town can't go forward in terms of

economic development until this problem is solved. It can't attract a new restaurant, it can't attract new industry, because who is going to come to a town where there is not safe drinking water and sewage disposal services? If it costs \$15,000 per home—and you're talking about family incomes that are about 40% less than the average in Ontario—how are these people going to pay for this very large ticket? They are surviving hand to mouth in terms of what they are trying to do on a daily basis. To go in with a program like COMRIF and say to the town of Lanark, "Come up with a third"—it's an impossible task. We need some kind of mechanism in government to help small towns like Lanark be able to go forward and get the necessary services their residents need to have safe drinking water and adequate sewage capacity.

1010

I note, in some of the examples on the Web site with regard to the northern heritage fund, that grants have been given, for instance, to North Bay, \$2 million for a waterfront development project, and to West Nipissing, \$186,000 for water treatment plants. There are many, many other examples of where there was an extra top-up given to these particular municipalities to try to meet some of the regulations and standards that we require of these people.

As well, eastern Ontario has received about 40% of former provincial highways in the readjustment of that particular responsibility, and that has fallen, to a great degree, on rural municipalities. We can argue here about whether that should or should not have been done, but that's the way it is at the present time, so these particular areas are wrestling with it.

These communities are characterized by low commercial and industrial tax bases. They are characterized by average incomes, both household and individual, of 15% to 20% below the Ontario average. They are characterized by a much larger aging population than the Ontario average of 12%. In some of these communities, 20% or 25% of the community are old-age pensioners and that kind of thing, and are living on small fixed incomes.

As well, the infrastructure in these areas has been aging and much of it needs repair. This area is characterized as well by a lot of crown land where there is no tax assessment or any kind of income coming back. Hydro corridors don't receive the same kind of treatment as they do near urban areas. The tax revenue that local municipalities get from these particular areas is much smaller than it is near urban areas because of its characterization as an easement rather than ownership. We go on with a whole number of other new challenges they have with regard to regulations under the environment: septage, waste, and it goes on.

These communities really need some extra help, and this gives the government a great opportunity to provide that help. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I'll be supporting my colleague from Lanark-Carleton's bill, Bill 187, the

establishment of the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp.

I want to acknowledge this morning Helen Chong, who did a lot of background research for me to prepare to make a few remarks on the issue. Some history is interesting.

The Eastern Ontario Development Corp. was established in 1973 by the government of Ontario to provide financial and advisory services to business to stimulate growth, economic development and employment opportunities in eastern Ontario. The original mandate for the EODC was to serve the counties of Victoria, Haliburton, Peterborough, Hastings, Prince Edward, Renfrew, Lennox and Addington, Frontenac, Lanark, Leeds, Russell, Stormont, Prescott, Glengarry and the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.

I went back to review a document produced by the Honourable Claude Bennett, a former colleague of the member from Lanark-Carleton back in 1975. In his document, Mr. Bennett clearly identified what the EODC was to do. Its first mandate was to provide incentive loans and term loans to prospective businesses in eastern Ontario. Its second mandate was to provide loans specifically to small business, to start their activity in eastern Ontario. The third was to provide venture capital for new ideas, for those business people who wanted to establish in eastern Ontario, to give them a leg up. Another one that was identified, and certainly what the member from Lanark-Carleton identified, was that they also provided loans for pollution control equipment—for those municipalities that had low assessment bases, an opportunity to upgrade their facilities. EODC would provide to its municipal partners loans for pollution control equipment. Also, something that's so important to eastern Ontario, they provided tourism industry loans for new resort facilities, cottage development and others in the heart of eastern Ontario. It also provided mortgages and lease-backs to new manufacturers that were being established in eastern Ontario. Mr. Bennett, the minister of the day, provided what I thought was a very comprehensive mandate to support those businesses in east-central Ontario.

I was concerned that in 1996, the minister of the day, the Honourable William Saunderson, wound down the activities of the Eastern Ontario Development Corp. at a time when the free trade agreement was coming into its era of great expansion, when the Governor of New York state, George Pataki, was bringing in a very aggressive bonusing system in New York state to allow industries in that particular state to defer property taxation for many years in order to attract business. When you look at the activities of the EODC, to have it wound down in 1996 I think was a strategic mistake. I'm pleased that we're here today to have the opportunity to discuss it.

When you look over the briefing material that was provided, I say to my good friend from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, I notice that Sir Sam's Inn, back in the early 1990s, was a recipient of EODC money to expand development. To my good friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, in 1991 there was an EODC loan to



a company in Pembroke that manufactured cooling suits for American Armed Forces personnel serving in the Persian Gulf at that time. The EODC has a long history of providing innovative support to manufacturers in eastern Ontario, and I'm very pleased, as the member from Peterborough, to support Bill 187.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I'm pleased to rise in support of the bill brought forward by my colleague the member from Lanark–Carleton. The bill would provide a means for the government to address the economic disparity that exists between eastern Ontario and much of the remainder of the province. Northern Ontario has benefited from this type of economic support for years.

The bill would establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp., and that fund would be able to maintain the eastern Ontario economic development monies. The money in the fund would promote economic development growth in rural areas and in smaller urban municipalities in eastern Ontario. My riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock is predominantly rural, and we have many small municipalities that could benefit from the provided support of the eastern Ontario economic development fund. Eastern Ontario lags behind the rest of Ontario in population growth and in income, and that was well articulated by the member introducing the bill today. Northern Ontario lags behind the rest of Ontario, and they have had the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Act fund set up there.

One of the areas in my riding most in need is Haliburton county. I've mentioned many times in the Legislature that it has the second-lowest average income in the province and has the lowest average household income in the eastern Ontario region. The closure of the Frost Centre by the present Liberal government made a precarious situation for local residents still struggling economically, and we're hopeful that we'll have a good outcome on that later in the year. In Haliburton county, the average household income is \$35,268 and in the city of Kawartha Lakes it is \$46,156, while the provincial average is \$53,626 for household income. So the disparities are remarkable.

I have met with many local businesses in the area about setting up a fund like this. They could see benefits in businesses developing and employing local people, helping the area economically, good jobs that could keep our young people in our communities. In the city of Kawartha Lakes, I can think of three villages—Omemee, Norland and Kinmount—that would benefit from updated water systems that would help entice more businesses to their area.

1020

The Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus has told the government that property taxes are going to jump, thanks to the government's new funding program. In their press release of April 25, they said, "The new formula side-steps eastern Ontario's crucial need for help with its share of downloaded provincial roads and bridges." They also noted that, "The formula caps funding for social

housing at 2002 levels." It doesn't address big increases in operating costs due to rising energy rates and it doesn't increase the capital improvements, some of which I just mentioned.

We have a large proportion of seniors in my riding—Haliburton county has the highest percentage of seniors in the province, for example—so right now, we don't have the labour force participation. Haliburton county has a labour force participation rate of only 50%; the city of Kawartha Lakes only 60.3%. That's much lower than the province-wide rate of 67.3%. This fund would help municipalities develop economic support, increase their tax base and revenues.

Sylvia Sutherland, the mayor of Peterborough and chair of Municipalities United for a New Deal, is fully supportive of this economic development fund and has said, "It is long overdue." Harvey Rosen, mayor of the city of Kingston, says, "I have no doubt that the council of the corporation of Kingston would support this bill with a large majority if not unanimity." Margaret Walsh, reeve of the township of Tyendinaga, says, "Thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my support for Bill 187."

There are a lot of positive effects that could happen in our communities. In Peterborough county, there are two topics—I know the member from Peterborough just spoke. The skating oval project and the DNA cluster are just two examples of larger projects that are on the books. Either one of these projects, if they could get some economic development money, would provide significant benefits in terms of jobs, the spinoff of housing and the purchase of goods and services that would be required to support them in the future. This is in Peterborough county.

The agricultural crisis has taken quite a toll in eastern Ontario and presented more challenges for our local small businesses. Haliburton county passed a motion last night that the proposed private member's bill that would create an Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp.—would have the potential to provide much-needed additional government investment.

I can see that there is a clear need across my riding and that this would help them out. I urge all members opposite to support this bill.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm speaking not only in my own right but on this occasion on behalf of the NDP caucus when I express my support for this particular bill by Mr. Sterling, which correctly identifies an incredible hurdle and burden that a whole lot of smaller-town and small-town Ontario is carrying, along with, from time to time, larger-municipality Ontario as well.

It's interesting, when you read today's Toronto Star, to learn that Ontario's economic growth again lagged behind the national average in 2004, and the trend is expected to continue this year. These are tough times for Ontario, and even tougher times for communities like some of the communities in eastern Ontario that Mr. Sterling is addressing, as well as some of the com-

munities down where I come from, in Niagara, that have lost significant high-wage industries: communities that, as a result of losing significant heavy industries, have lost the tax assessment associated with them; communities that are struggling with the downloading that persists. It's the very illustration that Mr. Sterling gave of a community where the per-household cost would be extraordinary to participate even in a program where there's shared funding with senior levels of government: extraordinary to the point of being incapable of being done. Of course, then you create a downward spiral. You've got the dog chasing its tail, where you never get out of the dilemma.

So I say that this bill is a very legitimate effort to create a vehicle for economic development in eastern Ontario, and I look forward to every member of this Legislature supporting it. More important is that the bill then has to move on to committee. I'm confident that the author of the bill, Mr. Sterling, will be identifying at the appropriate time, after a successful second reading vote, the committee to which he wants it to go, and not only that the bill go on to committee but that it be addressed in committee. The communities that Mr. Sterling is speaking to deserve an opportunity to make their case directly to elected representatives at Queen's Park during that committee process.

It's important. I don't know if the author of the bill had in mind the legislation in Bill 136, so-called places to grow. The fact is—look, think about it—if you want to talk about smart growth, you want to address the incredible impact of constant larger and larger concentrations of population in the greater Toronto area and the incredible cost that's inherent in that. People talk about efficiencies with that type of density, but I tell you, at the same time, there are incredible costs associated with that kind of density, including environmental costs.

I say we'd be making a lot more headway in terms of addressing environmental concerns, good planning concerns, if we gave small- and smaller-town Ontario—that's been whacked hard—some of the financial resources that they need to make themselves more attractive to Ontarians, to newcomers to Ontario, to newcomers to Canada, not only as places to live in but, if you're going to live there you've got to work there, so as places where there are jobs to do that work in.

As part and parcel of that, I want to make this observation. With all due respect, the Minister of Economic Development has a whole lot of explaining to do, not only in response to the article in this morning's Toronto Star about Ontario lagging once again and expected to continue to lag behind the rest of the country. Lagging—not even on par, falling behind, and you've got this government here that wants to identify Ontario as the economic engine of Canada? That isn't what the data and statistics tell us, is it? The loss of jobs in this province has been those high-wage jobs, unionized jobs, value-added manufacturing jobs, and all the service sector jobs in the world don't make up for the loss of half a dozen value-added manufacturing jobs. Those value-added manufacturing jobs are the wealth creation jobs. You

don't create wealth in a casino economy; you simply stir it around a little bit. You don't create wealth in the hospitality sector. You create wealth in steel mills, in lumber mills, in pipe mills. You create wealth when you're building ships and building airplanes and helicopters. You create wealth when you're processing food and foodstuffs. You create wealth when you're taking raw materials and adding value to them, with the labour of hard-working Ontario women and men.

We've got a government that's indifferent to the plight of small- and smaller-town Ontario. Let me deal with one issue alone, the issue of brownfields. In the city of Toronto or in the city of Winnipeg or Vancouver, brownfields could be remediated by the private sector, because the value of land is so extraordinarily high that the, yes, acknowledged incredible cost of remediating toxic lands is part and parcel of the investment, and there'll still be return on the investment from the private sector at the end of the day. But down where I come from—places like Welland or Thorold or Port Robinson or Port Colborne or St. Catharines; quite frankly, Peterborough; parts of Niagara Falls as well—the value of land simply isn't adequate to support the private sector investment if that investment includes the cost of remediation. There are acres and acres and acres of toxic land—I was going to say "lying fallow," but that would be a contradiction of their toxicity. But there are acres and acres of inner-city land that would be efficient places to develop on—you talk about efficiencies, right, Mr. Leal?—but they can't be developed because they're former industrial sites, some of them going back 100-plus years.

### 1030

Smaller-town Ontario—yes, places like Peterborough, I dare say, and places like where I come from—Welland, Thorold, Port Colborne, Port Robinson, Thorold South, St. Catharines—need some direct assistance in remediating those brownfields. You want smart growth? You want places to grow? Help those communities in Ontario. Restore those brownfields to the point where they can be built on and developed. Inevitably, they're inner-city. They're already serviced or a hair away from being serviced. They contribute to the vitality of those communities, should they be developed, yet they are being left behind in a disturbingly centralized approach to planning on the part of this government, a very disturbingly Soviet approach to planning, which ignores the potential of grass-roots development, grass-roots input and, quite frankly, smaller-town community-building.

I'm grateful to Mr. Sterling because his bill today permits us to discuss that facet of the reality of Ontario.

I'll tell you this: For most of Ontario the services underground don't consist of subways; they consist of a rotting infrastructure—sewer pipes, water pipes. Not just a disturbing number but a radically alarming number of sewer systems in communities across Ontario still aren't segregated, where either storm water is flowing into sewage treatment plants and communities are bearing an incredible cost—there's a real cost. The cost to the community is not the potable water; the cost to the commun-



ity is the sewage treatment. So millions of gallons of surface rainwater are flowing through sewage treatment plants, and similarly, there is an inexcusable amount of sewage flowing into natural waterways still, in the year 2005.

I admire those municipal leaders who understand that perpetual growth isn't the solution. Again, it's the dog chasing its tail. But what happens when you have growth that isn't self-financed, when you have growth that's on the periphery rather than the utilization of brownfields within the boundaries and in the inner parts of those cities, is that you have older-town Ontario subsidizing newly developed Ontario, at great risk not just to older-town Ontario but to the community in general. By subsidizing, I mean that municipalities have, under the surface, sewer systems and water systems, among other things, that are deteriorating, that are not up to code, not up to par in the first instance and that continue to deteriorate, whether it's under the surface or whether it's the foundation of roadways, so that at the point in time when you are going to address them in terms of repairing and rebuilding, the cost is 10 times, 10-fold, 20 times, 20-fold, what it would have been had it been addressed at an appropriate time, which in the case of most municipalities was 10 and 15 years ago and certainly, at the latest, now in the year 2005.

We'll hear, as we did last week, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade talk about the jobs he's bringing into Ontario. He says he's bringing jobs into Ontario. OK, like the cleaning jobs at the new hotels in downtown Toronto. Oh, yeah, we need more of those \$9-an-hour and \$10-an-hour jobs; they really help economies. Oh, yeah. Then of course you've got a government that wants to extend card-based certification only to—we know that unionized jobs are safer jobs, that unionized jobs are better-paying jobs, that unionized jobs have benefits and pension plans attached to them. We know that. That is clear. We've got a government here that wants to continue to pursue the anti-union, anti-worker agenda of the government before it by continuing to deny the vast majority of the workers in this province the right to card-based certification when it comes to organizing a trade union in their workplace.

Unions in workplaces mean better wages. Better wages mean more affluent consumers. More affluent consumers mean a more active economy. A more active economy means that more people get to share in the prosperity of this province rather than just the Conrad "Tubby" Blacks of the world, the robber barons of the 21st century, who will soon, hopefully, be Martha Stewarding in his own right. Skip the ankle bracelet for Conrad Black and his partner, Ms. Amiel.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** She's done pretty well by that.

**Mr. Kormos:** Ms. Amiel's done pretty well by that, Runciman says, which gets him into Hansard as an interjection. Runciman participates in the attack on the excesses and the criminality of Conrad Black and Babs Amiel, and it's nice to see an ally. Mr. Runciman is a

law-and-order guy in his own right and has been consistent in that regard. He's not just about throwing drug traffickers and people who hurt other people into jail; he's about throwing crooks in general in jail, and in my books, that means Conrad Black and Barbara Amiel, along with a few others, Nortel-related, in their own histories.

I look forward to being able to vote for this piece of legislation. It's about making smaller- and small-town Ontario better and healthier places to live, stronger places, which means a stronger, better, healthier Ontario. It's about restoring prosperity that the historical advent of free trade, among other things, have undermined. Young people in this province deserve to have some of the same hope for the future that our hard-working parents and grandparents generated for us.

Thank you kindly, Speaker, and thank you to the author of the bill.

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** I appreciate this opportunity to speak to Bill 187. I will be supporting Bill 187, I would like to say at the outset. But I would like to preface my remarks on the bill with, why now? Why at this stage of life here at Queen's Park? Why now? We had eight years when this bill could have been brought forth, eight years when the member for Lanark–Carleton could have stood up for the constituents of his riding and all the ridings in eastern Ontario and worked with his government at that time to get an Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp. established. But I'm delighted and very pleased that, at least now, it's being brought forward in a private member's bill, and that's why I say this morning that I'm going to support the bill brought forward by the member from Lanark–Carleton.

I was elected to represent a riding from eastern Ontario and I came here to do my very best to promote any opportunities for economic development for the citizens of the riding, for organizations that work so hard in those ridings. This is just one example where it's important that I support the establishment of the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp.

I know of the hard struggles we've had in recent months in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh with some of the problems at Domtar—we're trying to work on some solutions with regard to stabilizing opportunities there at Domtar—and then the closing of Gildan Activewear, a textile facility in my own municipality of South Stormont. This kind of corporation, this kind of funding, would certainly help in keeping industries, establishing industries and giving some sound foundations to the industries that are there or that want to locate.

I also want to say that we as a government do have a very important program, COMRIF, in place to help our small, rural municipalities.

This past Monday I was delighted to attend at the council chambers in North Stormont in my riding to announce some very important supports for bridge replacement and rehabilitation. I think we had about six

bridges on our list, and I know that three municipalities were absolutely delighted with what we were doing.

With that, and with what my good eastern Ontario member from Lanark—Carleton is doing, I would like to say I will support this bill that he has brought forward.

**1040**

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):**

It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege to speak this morning to my colleague from Lanark—Carleton's Bill 187, An Act to establish the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp. It is not hard at all to make a *prima facie* case for the approval of that bill.

For years we have been saying in eastern Ontario how difficult it is to develop our area when we seem to always be playing at a disadvantage. Governments talk about funding formulas as being fair and equitable. Well, "equitable" does not necessarily mean "fair." That's why years ago the northern heritage fund was instituted, because it addressed the inequities faced by people in northern Ontario. Is it equal? No, it's not. But it's fair because they're not playing on a level playing field. In fact, we're not doing that in eastern Ontario either.

If you look at the median incomes in ridings in eastern Ontario—and I'll speak more specifically about Renfrew county for the most part, but in eastern Ontario in general—they are far less than the average in the rest of the province.

Years ago the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus began. Those people have made a tremendous difference, as they have articulated the needs and concerns of eastern Ontario to various provincial governments. I give them a lot of credit. When Minister Gerretsen visited AMO this year and basically insulted them with the offer, I give the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus a lot of credit for forcing the McGuinty government to come up with a new formula within a couple of days. They were the ones who were front and centre in saying, "I'm sorry, but this is simply not enough. Pay your bills." In fact, they forced and embarrassed the government into doing just that.

When you talk about funding formulas, you talk about something that applies across the province. Those things are usually designed by bureaucrats who are looking for something: They analyze information and say, "Well, this is the formula," and then they apply it across the board. Across the board simply doesn't work. We've been disadvantaged in eastern Ontario and, in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, particularly Renfrew county, for years because of an education funding formula that does not address the specific needs and inequities that are faced by Renfrew county and most of eastern Ontario.

If there were a fund such as the one that Mr. Sterling is proposing, it would make it far easier to attract much-needed doctors to Renfrew county—a minimum of 17 short today, and that number is growing. This kind of fund would assist us in attracting physicians to those rural communities that we simply can't under the current arrangements. Also education transportation funding: We're not even eligible for rural and remote funding in

Renfrew county because of geographical quirks. If there's any county that is justified to have special funding for education transportation, Renfrew county, the largest county in Ontario, is it.

Crown land: 40% of the land in Renfrew county is crown land. There's no tax revenue off that land for those municipalities. How are they supposed to compete with areas in southwestern Ontario, where there's virtually no crown land? How are they supposed to compete when they've got all of these vast tracts of land they must service but get no revenue from? I could go on and on.

I want to give a couple of quotes. Norm Lentz, the good reeve of Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan, is very much in favour of this: "Bill 187 would greatly help eastern Ontario's communities and in particular communities in Renfrew county." Sandy Heins, the good mayor of Renfrew: "...we applaud and support your efforts in this initiative." Bob Sweet, warden of Renfrew county and chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus: "We want to thank you for bringing forward this necessary legislation in support of eastern Ontario." And Neil Stewart, the good reeve of McNab/Braeside, is very supportive of this.

My time is just about up. I'm wholeheartedly in support of this bill and I thank my colleague Norm Sterling for bringing it forward.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** I'm delighted to stand up and speak about this bill. Off the bat, I want to congratulate the member from Lanark—Carleton for bringing this forward. If I could, I'd vote twice, if the Speaker allowed me.

Coming from an eastern municipal area, I'm delighted he's doing this. I'm also very delighted that he had a change of heart, because while he was minister under that government, we had a program and they cancelled it. I was a municipal politician. To make matters worse, they downloaded a whole pile of infrastructure that municipalities had to take over.

Why would I not support this? I will. I guess I want it to be a bit more specific. During their era, I happened to be a municipal politician in one of the communities that the member referred to in this bill. I was also the chair of the Northumberland tourism advisory committee and chair of the Quinte Economic Development Commission, which is part of the greater eastern Ontario economic development folks who are doing a great job.

**Mr. Leal:** They brought a speedway to Brighton.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** Well, they didn't quite do that, but they did help a lot of people. I know campgrounds in my riding that benefited. In my municipality, they were able to get extra assistance.

The challenge was, as I mentioned, that the municipalities, which in turn affect businesses, were given an extra burden with the downloading of functions and responsibilities and, at the same time, we lost a great function to look after eastern Ontario.

I'm in overwhelming support of this, and also for it to go to committee to make sure that we get it right, to make sure that we have things in place to do the right things for



these communities, to complement some of the things the present government is doing. As a matter of fact, the COMRIF announcement we made in the last week will be another cog in the wheel to help those municipalities. For example, I want to refer to my riding. Under the new municipal partnership program to replace the old CRF, we were \$3.1 million to the plus in my riding. So the municipalities in my riding were a total of \$3.1 million positive. With that in mind, with the COMRIF announcement we just made in the last few days, my community, my riding, benefited to the tune of just under \$1 million to help with its infrastructure needs. If we can put in something like this to stimulate economic development, there is hope for eastern Ontario.

I'm going to leave some time for my fellow members to comment further, but I'm prepared to support this.

**Mr. Runciman:** I'm pleased to participate and give acknowledgement to the member from Lanark–Carleton, one of the deans of the Legislature. One of the reasons for his continued success at the polls over the years is his never-ending advocacy on behalf of eastern Ontario. This is another example of that, and I compliment and commend him for introducing this legislation.

It sounds like the bill is going to pass, and that is hopefully good news for eastern Ontario. Frequently I think that eastern Ontario is not a subject of discussion in this place, and that's regrettable. When people look at eastern Ontario, generally, if they don't live there, they tend to look at Ottawa and perhaps Kingston. When you look at economic results, again, they tend to look at some of those larger municipalities rather than focusing on the smaller communities, which indeed are having very difficult times.

1050

This is something that has been the case for many years. I recall that Paul Dick, a former member, I think from the same riding as Mr. Sterling, did a study when he was a member of the Mulroney cabinet that indicated quite clearly that in eastern Ontario the poverty levels, in certain pockets within eastern Ontario, were the highest in Ontario.

Look at some of the statistics that Mr. Sterling provided about differences in median income across the province. He indicated that in Haliburton they are 30% lower than median income levels. Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is close to 18% lower. That should be a concern of the government and should be a concern of members of the assembly, and we should all wish to do something about it.

A couple of members of the government asked the question: Why now; why is this bill before the House now? I can just speak to my own riding and the impact of a decision that is also directly impacting on Mr. Sterling's riding, and that's the expedited closure of Rideau Regional. We're talking about 800 very good jobs. When those jobs are lost it will have a devastating impact on both Mr. Sterling's riding and my own and certainly right across eastern Ontario in the villages and small, rural communities we're talking about.

The government has decided not to proceed with phases 2 and 3 of the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre. This was going to be designed as a centre of excellence to treat inmates in the corrections system in Ontario. We did phase 1, which deals with sentenced inmates who have some degree of mental illness—very innovative and the first of its kind in Canada. Phases 2 and 3 would have involved the transfer of OCI from Brampton and would have built, here in Ontario, a centre of excellence for the world in terms of treatment of inmates with a variety of afflictions.

I must point out that Mr. McGuinty, at the time the opposition leader, went into Brockville before the election and was asked the direct question, "Will you continue and complete phases 2 and 3 of the Brockville treatment and corrections centre?" He said, "Absolutely. This is worthwhile. This is something we want to see happen." We know that that now has been cancelled. Minister Kwinter has said, "Forget it; it's never going to happen while there is a Liberal government in office." You have to wonder about the rationale for that. Was it pure politics? Certainly it was an indifference to eastern Ontario and the financial challenges that many, many small communities are facing in eastern Ontario.

I have a couple of letters here today.

Robert Lawn, an outstanding mayor in my riding, an outstanding mayor in the province, from the town of Prescott, talks about the population decline in Prescott, a 5.6% drop in the last census; that they are providing filtered water and waste water treatment, and the cost is almost insurmountable; that they have lost a number of their manufacturing facilities; that they're losing their tax base; the senior population is increasing significantly above the Ontario average; low-income households.

Peggy Taylor, the mayor of the township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal, Leeds–Grenville, reiterates the concerns of Mayor Lawn, also endorsed by a number of other municipalities in my riding.

This is a growing crisis, one that the current government seems unwilling or unprepared to recognize. One of the things we can do immediately is pass Mr. Sterling's legislation, but we can also look at the decentralization of government operations, which was standard practice by the Bill Davis government and had an enormous and positive impact on that part of Ontario.

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings):** I'm also pleased to join the debate on this bill. I want to make it clear up front that I could not be more supportive of economic development in eastern Ontario. Eastern Ontario has faced some particular challenges over the years, and I certainly would support an initiative that I think is going to improve their situation.

But I'm kind of intrigued at how suddenly caring and creative the former government became when they moved from this side of the House to the other side. If this was truly a wonderful idea, why did the former government kill what was doing essentially the same thing? I don't have an answer to that. I believe that Mr. Sterling is an extremely intelligent man. He's an engin-

eer, by definition an extremely intelligent person, intelligent enough not to be in the profession, as I have chosen—seemingly intelligent. So why was it killed at the time that this member was at the table? I believe there may be a better way to do it than this.

I know that municipalities face challenges. When we go to attract industry to my community, one of the first questions they ask is, will their employees get a family doctor? That's a crisis in all of Ontario, certainly in eastern Ontario, but it isn't a crisis that developed in 2003. That was a crisis that existed for some time. During the previous government's term, we didn't see substantial increases in the number of doctor training positions. Foreign-trained doctors, during those eight years, continued to drive taxicabs, while at the same time my constituents suffered without a family doctor. I'm thrilled at some of the things our government has done to address that. I think the family health teams that were announced about a week ago will do wonders to attract doctors into eastern Ontario, and industry will follow that.

I know that one of the major challenges facing municipalities is the cost of the downloading they incurred under the previous government. One of the best attractions for an industry to come to your community is for someone from that industry to drive through your town and see empty fields with fire hydrants sticking out of them. That says to anyone who's looking that the land is developed, is ready, and, "We can move into place and get going." But municipalities have struggled with just maintaining their current stock, without having the hope of finding funding to expand.

The downloading of provincial highways, with the bridges being part of that—sure, there were some one-time dollars, but municipalities now struggle with that. The COMRIF funding announced last week will go a long way to address that, but that's a problem the previous government created that has had the effect of limiting development in eastern Ontario. COMRIF is going to help them. Costs were passed on to municipalities because of public health units, and we're seeing our government take it back.

Eastern Ontario has many attributes to attract industry. We have an extremely skilled and highly motivated workforce. We have a high quality of life—I believe, an extremely high quality of life. The markets that exist within 500 miles of eastern Ontario, which is a criterion for industry, are abundant. But I believe that the best advocate for my community is someone who lives in my community. I see my municipalities working together. I see Quinte West and Belleville sharing so many initiatives, saying that what's good for one is good for the other.

I see this initiative in this bill as more centralization. I support anything we can do to help eastern Ontario local communities thrive, but not this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Sterling, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Sterling:** I recommend to the previous speaker that he read the bill and understand how the Northern

Ontario Heritage Fund Act functions, because one of the attractions of this bill is that all the directors are taken from eastern Ontario. For the first time, the fund actually has local input, local control, and who better to decide the priorities for eastern Ontario than people from eastern Ontario themselves?

We can talk about the past—if the government wants to upload former provincial highways, let them do it—but let's talk about the present. Let's talk about higher energy costs. Let's talk about recent events with regard to the closure of Rideau Regional, as my colleague said; 800 jobs lost out of Smiths Falls and the Lanark-Leeds area. Let's talk about Domtar in Cornwall. Let's talk about the continuing decline of population in these areas.

We need to give hope to this part of our province. We need to give hope to eastern Ontario, where the young people are leaving our communities and going to the larger urban centres. We need to give our younger people some chance of opportunity in these areas.

Over the last 28 years, I've had two occasions when I've represented people both inside the boundaries of the now city of Ottawa and outside. There is a marked difference in the financial ability of people who live within and without those particular boundaries. This bill is designed to give those people who live outside those boundaries and who have not benefited from the past two or three decades of growth, wealth, opportunity—to give those people in those small communities some indicia of hope.

Lastly, the Eastern Ontario Development Corp. is nothing like this particular institution; therefore, let's not go through that particular debate.

Thank you all for your support.

1100

#### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS), 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (PASSEURS SCOLAIRES)

Mr. Brown moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 142, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to school crossing guards / Projet de loi 142, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux passeurs scolaires.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr. Brown has up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I'm delighted to have the opportunity this morning to discuss Bill 142. Bill 142 is an extremely simple and straightforward bill, but before I start to speak about it, I would like to acknowledge those folks at Spanish Public School in Mr. Solomon's class, who I understand are watching this proceeding this morning. They should be most proud of their council in the township of Shedden and their councillor, Debbie Solomon, who brought this issue to my attention. As a matter of fact, Ms. Solomon at AMO,



which took place in Ottawa last year, came and made representations to us with regard to providing the safe passage of individuals across Highway 17 during the time that the school crossing guards would be there. I'm going to use Spanish as an example because it could apply to many of the municipalities I represent and perhaps—well, I'm sure—to municipalities across the province.

Spanish is a small community of about 800 people, maybe 900. The schools are on one side. Highway 17 more or less goes directly through the village. The speed limit in the village is 60 kilometres per hour. It has all the truck traffic of Highway 17, which is, as we know, the Trans-Canada Highway—a very busy highway and at times a very dangerous highway—and it bisects the village. There is no stoplight in Spanish. We do have a flashing light at the main intersection, but there is no stoplight. What happens in this community and, frankly, in many others, even in larger cities and towns—I'm thinking of Elliot Lake, for example. They tell me they have the same difficulty, where people with disabilities, where people who may be a little slower than others in getting across the street, have great difficulty getting across. The school crossing guards, by legislation, are not permitted to help anyone but children across the street.

When I was canvassing the members of the Legislature about this bill, people were absolutely astounded that this was the case. Everybody said, "I thought they could help anyone. If Mike Brown was out there and needed assistance crossing the street, and the school crossing guard was there, I thought the school crossing guard could help him." Well, that apparently isn't the case. The act, which was first made in 1976, just speaks to children; only a child can be helped by a school crossing guard. I think we can understand how that may incur some liability.

One of the things that we need to know about school crossing guards, I think, is that they're employed by municipalities; their employers are municipalities. It may be that the municipality, in some cases, contracts it to a corporation to provide the school crossing guards, but their employers in essence are the municipalities. I've had some people believe that it's the school boards, but it's not; it's the municipalities. Some of the municipalities, particularly the ones in Shelden and Spanish, expressed the concern that there are some liability issues around this, as we might expect. So it's good to make it clear in the legislation that persons can be helped to cross the Trans-Canada Highway.

I think I'd be remiss if I didn't show the Legislature some appreciation for the hard work and dedication of school crossing guards. This is obviously a part-time job for people, and they take it very seriously across the province. They work very hard in ensuring the safety of our children, and now hopefully others when the Legislature gives my bill third reading and royal assent. They work very hard. They come out in all kinds of weather to help our young people get safely across the street to school.

The main street in a large part of my constituency is Highway 17, the Trans-Canada Highway. It goes through Webbwood. It goes through Massey, Walford, Spanish, Serpent River and Blind River through to Thessalon, Bruce Mines etc. We have crossing guards in many of those communities who have experienced the same problems.

What we're asking here—I think this is a rather simple amendment, obviously; it's a relatively brief bill—is that we afford the opportunity for school crossing guards to help more than the children who are crossing the road. I presume that you don't have to be a student, the way the act is written; at the moment, you just have to be a child. The idea that this is only for students is not the case even today.

As we well know, the government has some amendments in Bill 169 with regard to school crossing guards. It's presently before this Legislature. We have started the debate, I believe. It does some things already that will assist, and one of the things that I think is most important here is that it adds a penalty for contravening the Highway Traffic Act. It says, "Every person who contravenes subsection ... (3) is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not less than \$150 and not more than \$500." It's the first time there has actually been a fine, I understand, associated with not obeying a school crossing guard. I think that would be helpful.

I think of a gentleman I know in Bruce Mines who worked for some time trying to make sure that children crossed Highway 17 safely. He had quite a time trying to slow traffic down. As people who would know Bruce Mines, the school is pretty much at the western boundary of Bruce Mines, which means traffic coming in was supposed to reduce its speed from 90 kilometres an hour to 60 kilometres an hour. Some of them chose not to slow down as quickly as they should, and that was a real problem for the school crossing guard as he tried to get a little bit more enforcement to get the speed of the traffic down as the children tried to cross from one side of Highway 17 to their school on the other side.

I don't think that this is the most difficult issue the Legislature will face. However, it is an important issue, it's a significant issue and it will have real benefits for people in our society who need to cross busy highways or busy municipal streets during times when there are school crossing guards available to us. I urge members to help me help people, perhaps people with disabilities and perhaps seniors, to have better access to their communities. I would ask for their support.

I just wanted to point out, in case people didn't understand how busy Highway 17 through this area really is—we often hear around here about Highway 69 and how busy Highway 69 is. In truth, it is far more dangerous to be on Highway 17 between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury than it is between Sudbury and Parry Sound. I think that would surprise a lot of people, but the truth is that there are unfortunately more collisions. There are more fatalities. There is a growing and higher percentage of truck traffic moving through the area as we increase the

amount of goods that move from western Canada and the western part of our province through to the eastern part and vice versa. The forest industry is very active in the area. That necessitates a lot of chip trucks—I don't mean french fries—and a lot of major transportation, cross-Canada carriers.

1110

With all of that, I think it behooves members to make a relatively simple change to the Highway Traffic Act to allow all people to avail themselves of the services of school crossing guards, who are employed, I would remind members, by the municipalities. The Legislature has recognized their importance in that way. I'm just asking to do something that many people thought was always possible.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to participate in this debate this morning on this bill brought forward by our colleague Mr. Brown from Algoma-Manitoulin. I want to commend the member for taking this initiative. To those who encouraged him, who are watching in a classroom, as Mr. Brown indicated, I want to thank them for the initiative.

Isn't it interesting how, when someone becomes engaged and becomes involved in the political process, this place can actually work? This is how laws are made. This is the place where laws can be changed. We have a good example here of average citizens—in this case, a teacher—as was indicated by the member, his class very interested, bringing forward an issue of concern. Their member of the Legislature took the initiative, brought it forward, and so we have here before us in the Legislature a bill that calls for a very specific amendment. It's interesting. Not often do we have a bill before the House that effectively makes only one change. In this particular case, I again commend the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for, in its very simplicity, making what can be a very significant impact on the lives of people in this province.

As a former Minister of Transportation, this issue is particularly close to my heart. Having been involved in the entire time that I was Minister of Transportation, dealing with public safety and dealing with safety on our roads and highways was the absolute priority for me. I recall on a number of occasions working with the member on very similar issues. In fact, one particular case the member brought to my attention on this very busy highway was the fact that there was a need for some additional signage coming into the town. I worked with the member to ensure that that was done.

Once again, when the member brought this forward, I too had to take a second look to say, "What is this all about?" Surely there must be legislation already in place that deals with this, that a crossing guard, if that crossing guard happened to see a senior or someone who is physically challenged and required some assistance, would be able to do that. Of course, that is the civil thing to do.

As a child growing up, I was taught by my parents that if you see someone who needs help, particularly if it's a

senior or someone who is challenged, you go out of your way to help. Unfortunately, in today's society, if you do that, often there's a liability. If something goes wrong, by being just a good Samaritan you end up actually risking a monetary liability. How sad that is; nevertheless, that's a reality of our time.

There was, as you know, a piece of legislation that was passed in this House just a few short years ago that was, in fact, called the Good Samaritan Act. It was brought forward initially by my colleague Steve Gilchrist. His purpose was to ensure that if there was an accident, that if there was an emergency, whether it was someone who was in the medical profession who happened to be in the area or anyone else who came to assist that individual, by doing so there wouldn't be liability for that person, and they should feel free to provide that assistance. To the credit of this House, that bill was passed; in fact, it received royal assent.

What we have before us here is something of a very similar nature. I'm certainly going to support this bill. I will be voting for it today. I would like the member and all members here in the House to consider doing this. As was indicated, the government has brought forward Bill 169, which deals with a number of safety issues related to the Highway Traffic Act. There are two things that we can do here. It's unfortunate that this provision wasn't included in Bill 169. By passing this legislation today, the House is sending a very strong signal to the government that this should be done. So I would expect, at the very least, that this amendment would be incorporated into that bill before it's passed so that we have it in law.

The other option available to us here today in this House is that after we pass this for second reading, the normal course of events would be that it would be referred to committee and then, after it's dealt with in committee, referred back to the House for third reading and then await royal assent. I would be fully supportive if, following a vote here on second reading, the member stood in his place and called for unanimous consent to have third reading on this bill without further delay and that it then be brought forward by the government for royal assent. I would be supportive of that.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm going to do you one better, Frank.

**Mr. Klees:** I'm sure that I would then get support from Mr. Kormos, who has already indicated that he'll do one better.

**Mr. Kormos:** I'm going to see you and raise you five.

**Mr. Klees:** OK. That's good.

The bottom line is that we're in support of this. It's an appropriate piece of legislation. It's the right thing to do. I commend my colleague for doing it.

As the member for Algoma-Manitoulin indicated, we take these people for granted. I drive from Aurora to the Legislature every day. I always take the same route. I come along Wellesley from Parliament, and I always pass the same crossing guard. I have no idea of the person's name. I just know that they are there consistently, rain or shine. They obviously take their responsibilities



very seriously. To those people right across the province who serve us every day this way, I say thank you. Thank you on behalf of the community, thank you on behalf of the government, thank you on behalf of those children who take for granted—I'm sure kids don't really think about the fact that someone is going out of their way to provide this kind of protection and help. I'm sure these people very seldom hear a thank you. On behalf of the Legislature, I want to say thank you to them.

I also want to take this opportunity—I just happened to come across this on the town of Richmond Hill Web site. The town of Richmond Hill is in my riding. I'm very proud of my riding of Oak Ridges, which includes the town of Richmond Hill, the northern part of Markham and the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. For those who are interested, here is a posting today on the town of Richmond Hill Web site. It reads as follows:

"School Crossing Guards

"The engineering and public works department is now hiring qualified individuals for the following part-time position:

"School crossing guards—various locations

"Do you want to play an important role in your community?

"Do you want to help keep children safe?"

Following the passage of this, do you want to help not only children, but do you want to help keep our communities safe?

1120

"Then the town of Richmond Hill has an opportunity for you!

"Keeping children safe is a priority for the town of Richmond Hill. School crossing guards are a vital part of our community. They ensure the safe crossing of children as they travel to and from school. These highly dedicated men and women are working on the street every school day assisting children."

The posting goes on to say that the rate of pay is "\$11.50 per hour, increasing to \$12.25 after one year.

"Daily travel allowance of \$2.50 per day if crossing location is greater than 1.5 kilometres from your residence," and "up to 15 hours" of work. So I encourage people, whoever is watching this, to go to the Richmond Hill Web site and make an application. It's an important job, and we commend those who do it.

I want to take this opportunity as well to make one other comment about this issue of helping seniors and helping those who are physically challenged in our community. When I was Minister of Transportation, we attempted to bring forward some initiatives but we ran out of time to do so. But I implore the government to give serious consideration to this. We have legislation that we're discussing now in terms of how to help people in our community who are seniors or physically challenged.

There are some ways we can do this without it costing government any money. Let me give you just one example. The taxi industry has a very real opportunity, simply by training its people, to provide a level of service

that is a step above and yet appropriate for seniors and for the physically challenged. I don't know if you've observed this—I have—where a taxi will pull up in front of a store or a particular location and an elderly person is struggling to get out of that car, particularly if the weather is inclement. A very simple requirement would be a standard of practice that respects the elderly and respects those with physical challenges. That is, if you want to be a taxicab driver, then you treat your customer with respect. If it's a senior, if it's someone who needs help, you get out of the car and you help that person get from the car to where they're going. That just seems like common decency to me. These are the kinds of things that I feel, unfortunately, often are left unsaid and undone in our society.

This bill brought forward by the member from Algoma-Manitoulin fits into the "common decency" parameter that I speak to. For that reason again I commend him for bringing it forward, and we will be supporting it. I look forward to my colleague's comments, which I'm sure will assist us in ensuring that we give this bill rapid passage.

**Mr. Kormos:** I'm pleased to speak to Mr. Brown's bill, a modest proposal, one that carries with it eminent good sense and has the capacity to save lives. It seems to me peculiar that if a municipality is employing security guards—and I'm an advocate of that—municipalities should be assisted in ensuring public safety, especially when you're talking about smaller-town Ontario, where the community is accessed not by a secondary road, by a feeder road, but where the highway is the main street. It poses unique circumstances, and again, it's like so many of the communities down where I come from.

This is straightforward, clear as a bell and eminently commonsensical. For the life of me, we're talking about changing children to persons. The debate around adequacy of financing for crossing guards and the need for them to be a properly trained and backed-up resource is a different argument, a different debate, one which may well flow from literally enhancing the responsibilities.

I seek unanimous consent for this bill to be immediately put to second reading vote and to then be immediately called for third reading, with no further debate, and put to a third reading vote.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I've been advised that the standing orders dictate that the vote can only take place at 12 o'clock because of a division.

**Mr. Kormos:** A division? Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Well, let's do this right.

Let me clarify that. Under the standing orders, the Speaker can only put the question at 12 o'clock at the latest. It is a matter of when the question is put, and that it should be at that time.

**Mr. Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that. I ducked as that monkey wrench flew in my direction.

Let me put this to you, sir: I seek unanimous consent to set aside the standing orders for the balance of this member's private members' public business hour and then to immediately proceed to second reading vote,

voice vote only, and to then call the bill, if passed, for third reading immediately, with no further debate, voice vote only.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is obviously a bit unique. When the House is composed for private members' business, there really are not pardons, and it is composed for the purpose of all private members. So it isn't appropriate to dispense with the standing orders under those circumstances. Again, that should be dealt with when the time allowed for private members' public business has expired.

**Mr. Kormos:** Thank you very much, Speaker. That monkey wrench was followed by a spanner of mammoth proportions, but those things happen.

The Speaker has ruled. Look, it is pretty obvious where most people, if not everybody in this chamber, stands. I, for the life of me, can't see anybody voting against this eminently commonsensical proposal.

There are some issues. All of us remember with affection from our own childhoods—and, yes, all of us did have childhoods—the school crossing guard. When we were little kids, that school crossing guard seemed so much older, and they were probably no older than we are now, assisting us, and they acquired that incredible supervisory—this is what we've talked about in education, for instance, for a long time. It's not just the teachers; it's that whole educational community: secretarial staff, teachers' assistants, the housekeeping staff and the role they play, and that school crossing guard too, in that broader educational community in terms of providing security, creating a safer environment and being there in so many other roles as well.

I am not aware of any argument that could be made by people engaged in the role of school crossing guard. They are probably eager. I know these folks. They don't do it for the money. There are modest stipends for the people who do this. They're out there in cold weather, in rainy weather, in mucky, unpleasant weather. They're out there whether they feel like being there or not, whether they're ill or not; they know that there is a heavy responsibility attached to this, sadly, very low-paying job, but to the final one they perform their role with an enthusiasm and a vigour and a zeal that's all about public safety.

1130

I regret to draw the inference that there could well be some municipalities which, because of the legislation as it now stands, feel compelled to tell their school crossing guards, "Don't escort adults, but restrict your role to children." I'm only presuming that that's regrettably the case and that those arguments are probably made by hyper-cautious municipal lawyers about liability and so on.

This bill has been in the hopper long enough, since November of last year, that if the insurance industry had any concern about it, we would have heard from those scoundrels already. Think about it. They're ready to try to manipulate and control legislation. Look what they've done in terms of auto insurance over the course of my

lifetime here at Queen's Park, and certainly even over the course of the last couple of years: increased deductibles and reduced payouts in terms of new limits on payouts. It's the insurance companies' game right now.

As Mr. Bradley raises his eyebrows in concern, he and I both know that a public auto insurance system like we have in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia is the way to provide fair automobile insurance, fair premiums and fair benefits. Heck, you've got British Columbia with consistently lower premiums than Ontario, full tort—in other words, the innocent accident victim is entitled to receive all of their economic loss—plus a healthy no-fault plan. How can you top that? It's just irresistible logic that the public auto insurance system is the way to go.

Again, had the insurance industry had any concerns about this, they would have been bouncing off the walls by now. There would have been high-priced lobbyists telling the Premier to shut down Brown. There would have been; you know it. Clearly it isn't of concern. It has been around since November. The bill has had some publicity. Mr. Brown has made sure of that, because that's obviously one of the things you want to try to guarantee when you're introducing private members' public business. It's hard to conclude that the insurance industry isn't aware of it. So that argument is revealed in an anticipatory way as somewhat specious and not one that should be given any weight whatsoever. There's just no reason not to do this.

I suppose the other concern is that you've only got school crossing guards, and their workday is determined by the school schedule. In other words, you don't have a school crossing guard there during daylight hours. However, I put to you that persons who might be legitimately concerned about their safety when they cross the street—especially the kind of highway Mr. Brown is talking about where you're far more likely to see a school crossing guard. You're going to see him there because it's a high traffic area and because there are other peculiarities, idiosyncrasies around the environment that put that pedestrian at risk in that crossing zone.

Let's say I'm a person using an assistive device to get around, to generate my mobility. What I'm going to say is, "I hate crossing." You know how you were talking about Highway—

**Mr. Brown:** Highway 17.

**Mr. Kormos:** Highway 17. I've driven it many times.

If I've got to go to the supermarket and the pharmacy and I really feel uncomfortable crossing that highway, I'm going to go at 12 noon because I know that's when there's going to be a school crossing guard. I don't think that's an unfair assumption to make in response to the argument that this legislation tells the school crossing guard to assist all persons crossing the road but doesn't compel him or her to be there during daylight hours.

This is what happens. I've got places down in Welland—Fitch Street, for instance—where you know where the hotspots are. The seniors will call you and let you know. They're the ones who, even if you were a former



city councillor or mayor but you're in the provincial Legislature now, still call you, telling you where that crosswalk or that stoplight should be for a pedestrian crossing. You don't need high-priced consultants. The people know where these hotspots are. They know they're vulnerable because it scares the daylight out of them because they've got to scramble across before some guy, inevitably in an imported car—I'm a big fan of buying North American-made cars, as you well know, Mr. Brown. It sort of gets them just as they're halfway across and you've got to pull your behind in to avoid getting clipped by somebody racing through an intersection. So folks know where these are. I'm sure they would obtain a level of comfort knowing that there are times during the day when there is assistance at that crossing, and that's when they're going to use that crossing to get to where they're going.

I hope this bill passes on second reading. I hope Mr. Brown refers it to committee rather than committee of the whole. I certainly will not be utilizing any single member's role in determining the outcome of the bill after it receives second reading vote. That's up to Mr. Brown entirely. I'll respect his views in that regard. But I suggest to him that there may well be in the offing a scenario where House leaders will be meeting to agree upon a list of bills that are to be prioritized for committee hearings and therefore to be reported back to the House with the stamp of approval or disapproval of a committee. Mr. Brown—far be it from me to tell you how to conduct your private member's public business today—short of a quick consultation with the minions, the high-priced help in House leader Dwight Duncan's office, might refer this to a committee so he can then twist his House leader's arm to make sure this bill, in view of the unanimity of support for it, gets addressed in committee.

So far be it from me—it's Mr. Brown's bill. It's between him and his God—which are the clerks, of course, and his House leader. All I'm saying is that New Democrats support the proposition. We're pleased to support it and pleased to see it progress through this Legislature, and look forward to the enhanced safety of all people, kids and non-kids alike, crossing dangerous thoroughfares.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It is a pleasure for me to support my colleague the member from Algoma-Manitoulin on Bill 142. As a former city councillor, it's interesting that some of the most sought-after jobs are often advertisements for school crossing guards. Individuals who retire around age 55 take on these jobs. They provide a real degree of safety for children, because often they have these jobs over a long period of time and they get to know the kids and they know when kids are missing. It's almost like an additional safety factor that these adult crossing guards provide for a community. As a former mayor of Essex, Mr. Speaker, you would know that one of the things you often get petitions from residents about is to introduce adult crossing guards at a particularly busy crossing.

I think this bill is important because over the last decade in Ontario we've introduced software packages that control our signal lights, and often, through the introduction of these software packages, the cycles have been shortened considerably so that people often have some difficulty on the crosswalk in getting across. Having had the opportunity to be on committee to review Bill 118, which is the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, little things crop up. This is an issue that was highlighted by a number of individuals from the disabled community: the opportunity to get across a busy street. When you think of a disabled person who may get dropped off through disabled transit with their children in the morning, it's an opportunity to get across the street.

This is one of those obvious things. I was really surprised to learn, when I had a conversation with my colleague the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, that indeed crossing guards in Ontario couldn't assist anybody else across the street except children. I'm pleased he has brought forward this bill because it will really enhance the safety of many of our citizens—I've highlighted the disabled community and seniors—who, because of the shortening of signal light cycles, often have difficulty getting across, particularly at busy intersections. As a former municipal councillor, I would often get, as I indicated, petitions from local residents wanting the introduction of an adult crossing guard, particularly in a school zone where there were high volumes of traffic. Perhaps it's just an observation, but people seem to be moving faster and faster all the time in their vehicles. Often they're on cell phones. I have actually witnessed women putting on makeup and trying to drive at the same time. We're often not aware of our driving habits, and we're not going as slowly and being as observant as we should. I have also witnessed males with portable razors shaving as they're driving in their cars, and doing all these other things that tend to distract us. So anything we can do to enhance the amount of safety we can provide—I think this bill needs to be supported and moved forward as quickly as possible.

1140

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I too am pleased to rise in support of this bill, and I commend the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for bringing it forward. It's not so much what the bill does but the fact that it is being brought up, as the member from Oak Ridges explained in his presentation. It's the type of thing that governments never tend to get around to doing, and it becomes very obvious.

I'm quite sure that when the Highway Traffic Act was written to deal with the issue of school crossing guards and they used the word "children" in two places in the introduction to the function, they didn't intend that to mean that crossing guards would not be able to help a handicapped person or any person to cross the street while they were there. I want to commend the crossing guards in my community for not having realized the consequences—what could happen to them—and their liability if they did that, because I've seen many cases

where crossing guards in my community are already doing that. For those of us present who have spoken this morning, I think we all thought that was an appropriate approach to dealing with this matter. I commend the member opposite for bringing this forward to cover the liability that municipalities now realize is there: that if crossing guards help someone across the street, indeed they could get in trouble for doing that.

As we speak this morning, I think it's more important to talk about bringing this forward than what it actually does. I just want to point out to my constituents at home and to those others who are watching that this bill really just changes the word "children" to "persons" in two places in the Highway Traffic Act, so that crossing guards in my communities and in communities across the province can, in fact, do what they have signed on to do, which is to help people across the street where traffic could be a barrier to that happening.

I want to point out that school crossing guards, although they use the word "school," are not part of the education system but are part of the municipal transportation infrastructure. In fact, it's the municipalities that have decided we need to help children cross in school crossing areas. I don't think there's a municipality in the province that would deem it inappropriate to help other citizens to cross at the same time.

Again, I commend him for bringing this legislation forward.

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** First of all, I would like to commend the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for bringing forward Bill 142, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to school crossing guards.

When I received the information from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, it was just another opportunity for me, as a former municipal politician, to reflect on what my municipality had done in the past with regard to providing school crossing guards at strategic locations in my township of South Stormont and an opportunity to drive into the city of Cornwall to see the numerous school crossing guards at strategic locations in the city. It never crossed my mind that there are restrictions with regard to what's permitted to a school crossing guard assisting those crossing the street. The liability issue never crossed my mind with regard to assisting perhaps the frail and the elderly, perhaps those with disabilities and what not. It never crossed my mind.

It was about two years ago that I was in the city of Cornwall, heading to a school to make a presentation. I had retired and had been invited back. It was toward the end of the day, and I was speaking to a student council class after school. I was heading over, and a school crossing guard was standing at the corner, with no one else around, and she stepped off the curb, held up her stop sign and assisted me across the street. I thought to myself that I really didn't need that assistance, but after it was over I thought what an opportunity she had to show to her community that there's more to her work, that in all kinds of weather conditions there's more than just chil-

dren who may need that assistance. I remember I turned around and said thank you to her.

I look in my own community of South Stormont, where we have a high school, an elementary school and a Catholic school all located within close proximity. For a school crossing guard at a strategic corner, at the corner of Dickinson Drive and College Street in that community, the community is assisted by a senior high school student. After I retired, I had an opportunity of going to the high school and to spend a little bit of time doing some volunteer work there and saw the school crossing guard, this young fellow, out there doing his work every morning and right after school, certainly in good weather—but they had smiles on their faces too even in sleet, snow and rain.

I think this is an issue that certainly the member from Algoma-Manitoulin was provided information on. I understand that it was brought to his attention by councillor Debbie Solomon from the township of Shedden. This is one more opportunity of making the Highway Traffic Act better, and I commend the member for what he's done. I certainly think that, with all-party support, we can get it through this Legislature and it can very quickly become part of an amended Highway Traffic Act. I thank the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for his work for his community.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre):** It's my pleasure as well to support my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin. As the member from Oak Ridges identified, one just assumed this was part of the act to begin with, the fact that the good Samaritan law would provide for an individual having the capacity to help another individual across the street and not have any kind of liability or penalty that would be applied.

It's fascinating to read in the piece of legislation that school crossing guards only apply to children, and yet, as someone who was involved with the school sector for a long period of time, I couldn't tell you how many times I've seen parents with children being escorted across the street by school crossing guards, or any number of people, as a matter of fact, as at that busy corner around my area they automatically did, knowing that they had actually contravened the law, because they were only supposed to help those with children.

It makes eminent sense to be able to say that it should be applied to all persons, and that there should be the restriction of Ontario's Good Samaritan Act that limits any possibility of liability. It is a civil action to be able to help someone cross the street, whether they have a disability or simply have two bags of groceries and need some support to get across. It just makes sense, and, as someone indicated, it's just basic good manners as well.

I'd like to say to the councillor out of Shedden that one of the things I thought was most important was that she had worked together with her provincial member to bring forward something that was important to the community. It's a really good example of people working together to make a difference on behalf of the community they serve. It's another example, in private members'



time, where something that makes such good sense across the province is welcomed and supported by all members in the House, and this is a good example today.

**1150**

As people recognize, this simple change—and it isn't a difficult change—in a piece of legislation could make a difference in virtually every community on behalf of the safety of the children as well as that of other individuals. Again, it just makes eminent sense to do it.

Although there are speed limits of 60 kilometres an hour in many areas right across the province and that I've been through in the far north, the truck traffic that has increased so significantly makes it a barrier to people who are trying to cross the road at any given time. That's not to say that they necessarily deal with the same speed limit when they do cross. Any time we can provide additional safety just makes good sense within those communities.

When you look at the issue of weather conditions, it's not just about when things are perfectly sunny and the sky is blue; we're also looking at the winter or snow or fog or any other kinds of weather conditions and putting into legislation what many people have been doing for a long period of time anyway: enable somebody to help someone else across the highway or across the street.

I would like to say to the member, thank you very much for bringing this forward. It makes eminent sense. Thank you for working with your colleague and the children in the north to identify an area that makes some difference.

I also wanted to comment that this morning I had a taxi driver who opened the door for me as I got in and opened the door for me as I got out, and helped me with a piece of luggage. Maybe it is my grey hair and the fact that I look a little more like a senior, but I have to say that there are a lot of taxi drivers I've had the pleasure to travel with who have been very cordial in working with me, certainly as I have entered and exited. It is a civil action that I just expect. It's no more than saying "good morning" or "please" and "thank you." These are just parts of our everyday nature.

To the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, thank you for bringing this forward. I agree; I hope that there is speedy passage of this. It just makes common sense. It's a very small change to a piece of legislation which could have a significant impact on a lot of people across this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? If no other members wish to speak, Mr. Brown, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Brown:** I was looking forward to the intervention from the member for St. Catharines. Nevertheless, I want to thank the members from Oak Ridges, Niagara Centre, Peterborough, Oxford, Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and Etobicoke Centre.

This is one of those issues—I think someone on the other side said it—that make good sense that somehow governments just never seem to get around to. That's one of the things we can do in private members' hour: make

sure that some issues that don't get addressed by big governments doing big things—because sometimes these common sense, reasonable proposals get put forward by private members working with their community. I think this is about democracy; this is about a relatively small municipality with a council that saw a problem and saw a solution. Debbie Solomon came to me and brought this to my attention, and I'm pleased to be here on my constituents' behalf, making this change.

I was happy with the opposition being anxious to get this piece of legislation passed very quickly. I am hopeful that the government will see to that. We obviously have some rules around here about how these things happen, and that is a good thing.

I think there are two opportunities here. I will be asking for this bill to be ordered for third reading, and hopefully we will get the unanimous consent of the House for that to happen. But in the meantime I'll let the Minister of Transportation know that I would be hoping that when Bill 169 goes to committee, it might be amended to carry this section anyway. So there are two opportunities in the next little while to make this a reality.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you to all the members and to the table; this has been an interesting morning. As a matter of fact, the time allowed for private members' business has not yet expired. I'm going to give you a little explanation of some of what went on.

There are the standing orders and there is precedent, of course. But private members' public business is a little different from the rest of the operation of the House. There are no parties, as I mentioned earlier; there are no whips. So members are entitled to know that the vote will not be taken before the time allowed for private members' business has expired. So what we're going to do is suspend the proceedings for—well, it depends on which clock you look at—about three or four minutes. So just enjoy conversation.

*The House recessed from 1156 to 1200.*

#### EASTERN ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LE FONDS DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUE DE L'EST DE L'ONTARIO

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Thank you for your patience. If the members will take their seats, we'll deal with ballot item number 63, standing in the name of Mr. Sterling.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?  
Carried.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** I seek consent to have this bill referred for third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Sterling has asked unanimous consent that the bill be ordered for third reading. Agreed? Agreed.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT  
(SCHOOL CROSSING GUARDS), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LE CODE  
DE LA ROUTE (PASSEURS SCOLAIRES)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall now deal with ballot item number 64, standing in the name of Mr. Brown.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I would ask unanimous consent of the House for this bill to be ordered for third reading.

**The Speaker:** Mr. Brown has asked unanimous consent that the bill be ordered for third reading. Agreed? Agreed.

It has been an interesting morning. All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the chair. This House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1201 to 1330.*

WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Might I ask for unanimous consent and permission to wear the black and yellow ribbon in honour of the fallen on Day of Mourning?

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The Minister of Labour has asked for unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** Earlier this week through COMRIF—the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund—some transportation projects in and around Waterloo-Wellington will be receiving funding. I'm sure that these funds will be put to good use in communities like the county of Wellington, the township of Centre Wellington, the town of Erin, the township of Guelph/Eramosa, Wellesley township, Wilmot township and the city of Kitchener.

While federal-provincial money for bridge and road projects is always welcome, there are some other projects that cannot be forgotten by this provincial government. These projects are contained in the Waterloo-Wellington transportation action plan, which has been before this government since the day after it was elected. The action plan was made in partnership with our local governments, and it represents their top transportation priorities.

Their key priorities include Highways 7 and 8 between Kitchener and Stratford, a new four-lane Highway 7 from Guelph to Kitchener, assistance to Wellington county to

rebuild Highway 24 from Guelph to Cambridge, a repaired and upgraded Highway 6 from Fergus to Mount Forest, Waterloo region's light rail transit initiative, and OSTAR-like funding for other transportation-related projects.

As it stands now, Highway 7 is becoming a parking lot—congestion is stifling mobility and prosperity—while Highway 6 from Fergus to Mount Forest has deteriorated badly and needs an upgrade for safe travel now.

This brings me to the question: Why hasn't the government announced funding for priority projects like Highway 6 and Highway 7? Is it because the federal and provincial Liberals have misallocated millions of rural dollars on city projects as a federal election looms? I ask the government to cut the partisan pandering, unclog the bureaucratic congestion and finish the jobs on Highways 6 and 7.

EARTH DAY

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I rise in the House today to commend our government for having the courage to close the Lakeview coal generating plant. I also want to commend the 150 volunteers who joined me in the cold spring rain last Saturday in honour of Mother Earth. This past weekend, Hamilton celebrated Earth Day by planting over 950 trees along Hamilton West's picturesque Princess Point, a valuable and delicate marshland ecosystem stemming from the shores of Lake Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, you should have seen these volunteers. We were dripping wet. The trees were planted alongside the shoreline of the marsh in order to develop the fragile nursery for the many different types of fish that inhabit the shallow waters. The frigid, wet weather would have frightened away many less devoted volunteers, but those who appeared through the torrents of rain that morning showed a real dedication to our environment.

Among the volunteers involved were Jed Goldberg, the head of Earth Day Canada, who said it was a perfect day for planting trees, and Marilyn Baxter, the executive director of the Bay Area Restoration Council. The sponsors included the Royal Botanical Gardens, Earth Day Hamilton, Suncor Energy Foundation, and Sunoco, who donated over \$12,000 for this worthy event.

I would like to thank everyone involved with our tree planting endeavour and applaud the commitment they showed on a cold, damp April morning, and also to let everyone know that our government cares about the environment.

UKRAINIAN EASTER

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I rise to inform all members of the House that Easter will be observed this weekend under the Julian calendar. On Sunday, May 1, many Eastern Orthodox and Catholics around the world, beginning in Jerusalem, will mark the original Easter date, including Greeks, Ukrainians, Russians, Bela-



rusians, Romanians, Ethiopians, Egyptian Copts, Syrians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Arabs, Asian Christians and others.

As a proud Canadian of Ukrainian ancestry, I grew up in a home that observed the rich traditions associated with what is our most important religious holiday of the year.

The service that leads up to Easter Sunday begins tonight with the reading of the 12 Passion gospels. This is followed on what is called by the Christian East "Great Friday" rather than "Good Friday," with the veneration of the shroud that is carried around the church three times before being placed amid flowers before the altar.

Early Sunday morning, the first song of Pascha, which means Passover, is intoned in unison by the entire church parish, beginning with the words "Christ is risen." Everyone then shares the original paschal candles, and soon the entire church is bathed in the light of Easter.

One of the most famous of Ukrainian Easter traditions is the beautiful decorating of the pysanka, or Ukrainian Easter egg, which represents Christ breaking the bonds of death through his resurrection.

On behalf of my leader, John Tory, and the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, I extend my warmest best wishes to the many Ontarians who will experience the joy of Easter this weekend. Khrystos voskres.

#### MICHELLE AND BRETT QUANCE

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** People in this Legislature will remember Michelle and Brett Quance, familiar faces in my community who have been here so many times. The members of my community are once again coming together to hold a fundraiser for Brett and Michelle's four-and-a-half-year-old autistic daughter, Tennyson. The fundraiser will be held on the evening of Thursday, May 31. It will be an evening, we hope, of comic relief at De La Salle College, with some really excellent entertainment. Tickets are only \$40, with all of the proceeds going to the family's cost of providing IBI treatment for their young child.

Last year, the Beach community held a fundraiser for them as well, and it raised \$45,000, which to some people might seem a lot of money, but at \$6,600 a month, the need for even more funds is never-ending.

Last week in the Legislature, we were told that Tennyson's wait for provincially funded IBI treatment would now be longer than ever as a result of the Ontario Superior Court's ruling that Ontario must provide IBI therapy for children over the age of six. We were told that that court ruling now complicated the waiting list for children under six. Parents of under-six and over-six children will not, however, be divided as a result.

While this family and countless others wait, communities and friends will spring to action to give autistic children the help they must have now. While I encourage all of you to support this worthy endeavour, I have to say that I hope it's the last fundraiser that Tennyson and her family will have to have.

#### COMMUNITY LIVING OAKVILLE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I rise today to recognize Community Living Oakville, which is a great agency in my riding of Oakville. Community Living Oakville, through families, paid employees and volunteers, provides services to people who have an intellectual disability, to allow them to live in and be a part of all the best aspects of my wonderful town.

I also rise to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Community Living agencies across our province, in many of your own ridings as well. As a province and as a country, we can be proud of the work that is being done by these agencies in promoting the inclusion of our most vulnerable citizens in our communities. Many of these agencies were started by ordinary families who had a vision that their son or daughter who had an intellectual disability should be included in all aspects of our societies.

May is Community Living month, a time when we can reflect on and celebrate this important ideal, which is to include our constituents who would otherwise be excluded from many of the simplest aspects of our society.

There is a saying that a nation should be judged by how well it treats its most vulnerable citizens. As we know in this House, sometimes that can be an onerous task, but in Canada we have the assistance of Community Living to help us make that ideal a reality in all of our ridings. Today, I think we owe them a debt of gratitude.

#### KINGSTON ART DISPLAY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Today's National Post contains a very disturbing article informing us of so-called art drawn by a man convicted of killing a police officer being publicly displayed in the city of Kingston.

What makes this story so disturbing is the nature of the drawings and the background of the individual who drew them. They portray police officers as racists wearing Ku Klux Klan masks. The man who drew them is in prison for the cold-blooded murder of a 38-year-old Ottawa area policeman with two children, David Upton.

1340

I would argue that the public display of anti-cop art by a cop killer is deeply offensive at best, and at worst may constitute hate propaganda. The Criminal Code, section 319, speaks to public communications that incite hatred against an identifiable group. I believe these cartoons do attempt to incite hatred against police generally and that police, with a broad interpretation of the definition of identifiable groups, can qualify for protection from this type of attack.

I encourage the Kingston police to investigate, guided by hate crime legislation, and I would further encourage the good people of Kingston to withdraw their business from the commercial enterprise that promotes and displays this deeply offensive material.

## EASTERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh):** As a proud representative of the riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh in eastern Ontario, I was pleased to participate in the debate this morning concerning the development of an Eastern Ontario Economic Development Fund Corp.

The obstacles facing eastern Ontario are unique and enduring. Creative dialogue and useful policy will do much to assist communities in eastern Ontario to overcome these hurdles. Unfortunately, statements that are contrary to fact presented during question period are not constructive. For a member who has committed himself to, and I quote, “a higher standard of legislative decorum,” it was unfortunate to hear the leader of the official opposition present inaccurate information on the new Ontario municipal partnership fund.

I want to inform the honourable member that this government is committed to eastern Ontario, and, contrary to the member’s numbers, the municipalities in my riding will receive an overall increase of 11% in OMPF funding this fiscal year. I would like to add that the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry are getting more money per household than any other upper-tier municipality in Ontario, at a rate of \$387 per household. Combine this with COMRIF announcements of this past Monday which will help three townships in my riding refurbish crumbling infrastructure, and we have a pattern of support from this government. Eastern Ontario is not overlooked.

I remain fully supportive of constructive dialogue, but I cannot support statements that are contrary to fact.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to point out to you that the member who just gave his statement made an unparliamentary statement about the leader of the official opposition having presented inaccurate information. I ask you to draw that to the member’s attention and ask him to withdraw that statement.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I would like to draw to the attention of the members that when a member stands on a point of order, I would like to hear it first.

If the member has used any unparliamentary language, I’m sorry; I did not hear it. But if it is so, I would ask him to withdraw.

**Mr. Brownell:** Mr. Speaker, I did not make such a statement.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Klees:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would, with respect, ask you to check the Hansard record and make a ruling on this.

**The Speaker:** The member has withdrawn.

**Interjection:** He did not withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I’m going to ask him one more time. I did not hear it, but if the member has made an unparliamentary comment, I’d ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr. Brownell:** Mr. Speaker, I did not make an unparliamentary statement, and I do not withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Members’ statements.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL  
FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls):** On April 11, the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Prime Minister in support of Premier McGuinty’s request to narrow the \$23-billion gap between the government of Canada and the province of Ontario. In their letter, the chamber illustrated the unfairness of the federal-provincial arrangement by stating that under the \$600-million border infrastructure fund, Ontario will receive only \$305 million in federal funding over five years.

Sounds good, but it isn’t, because they continue to say that this only amounts to 51% of the total fund. For the House’s information, Ontario accounts for 75% of all Canadian truck crossings into the United States. This is not good economics, and, I will tell you, it’s not good news. The net result is a \$145-million shortfall in border infrastructure improvements that would further fuel Canada’s main economic engine.

What is significant about the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce letter is that it was totally unsolicited and it comes from a completely unbiased perspective that gives validation to the Premier’s position. Let me conclude by directly quoting from the president, Carolyn Bones, to the Prime Minister:

“Ontario is Canada’s economic engine.

“As such, our chamber is concerned about the funding levels the federal government provides to Ontario.

“We urge you to invest in Ontario’s future by increasing the level of federal government funding to this province.

“Help Ontario continue to move forward. We urge you to address the \$23-billion” gap.

“In doing so you will help ensure Ontario continues to drive the economy of our country. That helps everyone.”

This House owes a vote of thanks to the Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce for their leadership in support of this debate.

## STUDENT LEADERS

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** I’m very pleased to welcome the student health ambassadors from Ottawa to the Legislature today.

I would like to introduce these community leaders from Ottawa schools in my riding: Alex Beaudoin, Erin McConnell, Nathan Juhasz, Alexandre Lancot, Karine Jolicœur, Camille Juzwik, Emilie Miller, Catherine Laska, Rowena Rodriguez, and Michel Nungisa. They



are student leaders, part of the Exposé Team, who have mobilized classmates across the city of Ottawa and have reduced smoking by their peers by at least 5% in Ottawa schools. Together, they work with public health nurses and their peers to help save their friends and classmates from cigarette addiction.

Our federal government spends \$27 million to get people off cigarettes. Big tobacco, on the other hand, spends \$77 million a year to get people hooked, to get these young people addicted. They rely on the dependence of youth for their future tobacco sales. Did you know that there is a 50% greater likelihood for you to smoke because of "power walls," the enormous behind-the-counter advertisements in retail outlets?

I thank you for being here today to lend your support to this important legislation. Some 23,000 signatures petitioning us to have a smoke-free Ontario have been delivered to us today. No more power walls. Out of sight, out of mind. We must support these students, who have done their job to improve the lifestyle and life expectancy of youth who have never smoked or who have quit this addictive habit.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Introduction of bills. Member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** One of your favourite members, and you almost missed me.

### BREAST IMPLANT REGISTRY ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LE REGISTRE DES IMPLANTS MAMMAIRES

Ms. Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 192, An Act to establish and maintain a provincial Breast Implant Registry / Projet de loi 192, Loi prévoyant l'établissement et la tenue d'un registre provincial des implants mammaires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** This is long overdue. The purpose of the bill is as a measure to protect women's health. Cancer survivors—and more and more, unfortunately, young women—are choosing to have breast implants. Little is known—or, in fact, there's a great deal known about some of the dangers associated with them. Given the potential comeback of silicone gel implants now, this is a critical bill.

1350

What it does is create a breast implant registry, whose registrar is appointed by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The registry contains specified information from health care practitioners regarding each breast implant surgery performed, from manufacturers, importers and distributors of breast implants on any rele-

vant health risks they identify, and from researchers regarding findings they make public if they accessed the registry in order to conduct their research. The registrar may contact users of breast implants and the health care practitioners who perform breast implant surgery on them in specified circumstances in order to provide them with information the registrar considers necessary to assist in assessing the risk to the user's health.

The bill amends the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make the registrar a health information custodian under that act with respect to personal health information and to make a related consequential amendment. The bill provides that information contained in the registry that is not personal health information may be disclosed by the registrar as prescribed by regulation.

### PAYDAY LOANS ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LES PRÊTS SUR SALAIRE

Mr. Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 193, An Act respecting payday loans / Projet de loi 193, Loi traitant des prêts sur salaire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** The bill enacts a new act entitled the Payday Loans Act, 2005. The act governs payday loans, which are defined as loans in an amount of \$3,000 or less that are made for a term of two months or less. The act imposes licensing requirements on persons who make payday loans and establishes procedures for revoking and suspending licences, subject to appeal provisions. Offences and regulatory requirements are provided for, as is a process for dealing with complaints.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice or further debate with regard to private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirements for notice be waived with respect to ballot item 67.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Today I'm proud to report that the McGuinty government has closed the first of five coal-fired power plants in Ontario. This morning, we closed the Lakeview generating station for good. We have taken the necessary steps to close the greater Toronto area's single biggest source of air pollution.

We're also the first jurisdiction in North America to say no to coal. Ontario is setting an example—an example that I expect will not go unnoticed across the continent. Ontario's coal commitment shows the world where Ontario stands when it comes to cleaner air, healthy Ontarians and a robust economy. We're not just talking about replacing coal; we're actually doing it.

We've been working with Hydro One to make sure transmission facilities in the GTA are upgraded so that we can continue delivering electricity safely and reliably without Lakeview.

By closing Lakeview, we're reducing harmful emissions. We're eliminating 26% of sulphur dioxides from our air, 8% of nitrous oxide, and millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from the GTA. Closing Lakeview removes the equivalent of 500,000 cars from our roads. What this means for our citizens is cleaner air and better health.

Our commitment to coal closure is also a big contribution to Canada's Kyoto plan. Ontario is doing its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and changing the way we generate electricity is a big part of that.

We're replacing coal because the cost to our health and to our environment is just too high. A report I released yesterday found a relationship between increased air pollution due to coal-fired station emissions and up to 668 premature deaths, 928 hospital admissions and 1,100 emergency room visits in Ontario every year. The true cost of using coal to create electricity is unacceptably high. Burning coal increases air pollution that contributes to the incidence of premature death, increased asthma symptoms, smog and adds large quantities of greenhouse gases to our atmosphere.

In sum, continuing to use coal when you consider the health and environmental impacts is just not responsible. What is responsible is that we are moving to create a culture of conservation and we're moving to the next generation of cleaner energy in Ontario.

Unlike previous two governments, the McGuinty government has made conservation our first priority. We are dedicated to transforming the way Ontarians think about and use electricity. We have an ambitious plan to install a smart electricity meter in each and every Ontario home and business by 2010. Last week, I announced that Peter Love will be the new chief energy conservation officer, who will develop province-wide conservation

programs. We directed local distribution companies to invest \$160 million in new conservation and demand management initiatives. More will come later this spring when we introduce new legislation on conservation.

We have also been acting aggressively on new supply. On renewables, we successfully procured enough power for more than 100,000 homes last November. Last week, we kicked off another renewables RFP for enough power for more than 200,000 homes. Two weeks ago, we announced the first four winners of the clean energy RFP, which will be able to produce power to power more than 650,000 homes.

We directed OPG to refurbish Pickering A unit 1, enough to power 350,000 homes. We also directed OPG to proceed with the Niagara tunnel project. As well, we appointed a negotiator to deal with Bruce Power and we are now reviewing a tentative agreement that will see enough power for more than one million homes come back into service.

This amounts to the creation of enough power for more than two million homes, or more than 5,000 megawatts, since we came to office.

As you can see, the McGuinty government is taking all the necessary steps to ensure the citizens of Ontario get what they deserve: a cleaner, greener Ontario. Closing Lakeview is an historic step in achieving our commitment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Responses.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Minister, yet another announcement. I'd just like the members of the House to stop—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Let me get your time. I'll call it again. Responses.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I'd just like the members to stop and take a moment to pay tribute to Elizabeth Witmer and our leader, John Tory. On March 26, 2001, it was Elizabeth Witmer who committed to the closing of the Lakeview plant on behalf of our government.

No one disagrees about the impact of dirty coal plants. What we disagree with is your reckless election promise to close all five coal plants, almost one third of Ontario's generating capacity, by 2007. Naturally Jack Gibbons will agree with you. I understand that. Our PC position was, and still is, to close the existing dirty coal plants by 2015. We are honest with the people of Ontario. We care about the environment and the economy.

1400

Minister, your problem is that you have no plan and you fail to keep your promises. The people of Ontario have no regard for your commitments. You have raised false expectations and the price of electricity—at great risk, I might say, to both the reliability of the system itself and our environment. Will you just simply, for once, tell the people of Ontario what your secret plan on the closing of the coal plants really is?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** We closed it today.



**Mr. O'Toole:** Yes. As Mr. Bradley has just pointed out, that's their plan: to follow through on what was our plan and remains our plan. What's different is that we were straightforward with the people of Ontario.

Clearly the issue here now becomes one of management and integrity. Quite honestly, it reminds me of most of the 231 promises, of which this is just one. It's another broken promise. Why I say that is that in fact you have failed on many occasions to be quite straightforward with the people of Ontario, especially as it applies to the Nanticoke plant. Will you tell those communities today that your plan is on track to close Nanticoke by 2007? If so, tell us part B of the plan: What is the replacement power for the 4,000 megawatts? You're putting the economy of Ontario at risk. You aren't being straightforward with the people of Ontario.

I was at a presentation this morning by the Ontario Energy Association. These are a group of experts, and I went there to listen and to learn. I didn't see you in attendance and I suggest you should have been, if you weren't. Leonard Crook said this morning, after looking at the situation across the world of the importance of energy, that the plan on coal wasn't achievable. The energy sector knows it. The only person who doesn't seem to know it is you.

Once again, I want to repeat for the record the point that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister, when you were giving your statement, the members on the opposite side listened attentively, without any disruption. The member from St. Catharines and yourself keep interrupting. I would like to hear his response.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I want this to be my concluding remark. On March 26, 2001, in response to a request from Hazel McCallion, the Ontario environment minister, Elizabeth Witmer, announced that the Lakeview plant would be converted from dirty coal by the spring of 2005. That's what's happening today. That's what the minister is announcing. I request the House to pay some respect to Elizabeth Witmer. In his remarks, he made no mention. They assumed they had the plan. They have no plan for energy except to raise prices and put the economy of Ontario at risk. I put to you that most experts in the field know it. Minister, you don't know it, and that's what's troubling. It's a case of not being able to manage and not being forthright with the people of Ontario. The price is rising; the supply is dropping.

The minister is now leaving the House because he is disappointed, and he should be disappointed. He has no plan for the people of Ontario except to raise the price. They're going to see it in their bills. It isn't about clean coal; it's about the lack of energy and the lack of a plan from the minister, who is not up to the job.

**The Speaker:** Responses. The member from Toronto—Danforth.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Marilyn will be in favour.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto—Danforth):** Absolutely I'm in favour of closing down the Lakeview coal plant. Who wouldn't be?

It's funny listening back and forth to, "Oh, the Tories said they were going to do it, so it was their plan, but the Liberals carried out the Tory plan." Let me tell you something about Lakeview that most people don't understand: Anybody who would be in government would have closed down Lakeview by now, not necessarily to protect the environment, but because it's in such a state of disrepair that there is no viable alternative but to shut it down—right, Elizabeth? Remember when you looked at that plant when you were in government? It's laughable that you get up and say that this is just being done to protect the environment. You know, Minister, what state of repair it is in and that it absolutely has to be shut down. But whatever the reason, it is a good thing that Lakeview is finally closing down.

I want to underscore here, though, that the question still looms: Where is the plan to meet the election commitment to close down the remaining plants like Nanticoke and Lambton, which rank among the filthiest polluters in this province? What is the plan to replace them with clean supply from sustainable sources?

Where the McGuinty government is really going, as we heard yesterday and over the last few weeks, is to natural gas and nuclear, of all things. I invite people to take a close look at this nuclear/gas strategy, as my leader said yesterday, at the presumed health costs from the study the minister released yesterday. This slipshod study says that there are very few health and environmental damages with nuclear. As my leader said yesterday, we invite the McGuinty government to go to Elliot Lake and talk to the widows who live there about all the uranium miners—their husbands, their fathers—who died from cancer associated with mining uranium. Go talk to them and see what they have to say about how safe nuclear power is. I know the member from St. Catharines agrees with me on this.

"The McGuinty government produces a report that tries to say that there are no environmental or few environmental and health consequences associated with nuclear" and gas. That is not—let me say it the same way my leader did: That is a cooked report. "Even more, they then trot out a table saying that the costs of building nuclear plants are fairly predictable and low." I thought that was an April Fool's joke. "Was this the \$4-billion estimate that you gave for Darlington, and then, when you completed Darlington, it cost \$15 billion more—an \$11-billion cost overrun? Is this the billions of dollars that have been spent on refurbishing when it was supposed to cost only a little bit?"

What I find really interesting about this today is what is not included in the plan. There are blueprints from the Suzuki Foundation, from the Toronto Environmental Alliance and from the Pembina Institute telling you what you have to do. When the Tories ask and when we ask what your plan is to shut down the remaining plants, you don't have one. The blueprint has been here for a while,

and what did we see? There's no energy efficiency being considered as one of your options in here. For instance, what if you stopped using electric heat in the thousands of apartment buildings across this province that were built cheaply in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and that use very inefficient and expensive electric heat? Did the McGuinty government take a look at that? No. They wouldn't look at that. Did they look at helping low- and modest-income people who have inefficient refrigerators or appliances in their home? No. Did they look at what a low-interest loan program would do in assisting those families to purchase energy-efficient appliances and reduce their consumption of electricity? No. The gas plants they proposed—and one was proposed in my riding—didn't even have the added benefit, as promised in the first place, that they would be more efficient by being cogeneration.

I say to the minister: Look at what is happening in Germany, France and in other jurisdictions—in the US—where they are phasing out nuclear and fossil fuels, talking about them as things of the past and looking to the future, with the cornerstones being energy efficiency, conservation and new, green energy. Until we turn that ship around, we are going to continue to have the same problems and you will not be able to close those polluting coal-fired plants.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### MANDATORY GUNSHOT WOUNDS REPORTING ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DÉCLARATION OBLIGATOIRE DES BLESSURES PAR BALLE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 110, An Act to require the disclosure of information to police respecting persons being treated for gunshot wounds / Projet de loi 110, Loi exigeant la divulgation à la police de renseignements en ce qui concerne les personnes traitées pour blessure par balle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1409 to 1414.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Barrett, Toby  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Chambers, Mary Anne V.

Flaherty, Jim  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Jackson, Cameron  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kennedy, Gerard  
Klees, Frank  
Kular, Kuldeep  
Kwinter, Monte

Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Parsons, Ernie  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Qadri, Shafiq  
Racco, Mario G.  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Sandals, Liz  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Sterling, Norman W.

Chudleigh, Ted  
Colle, Mike  
Craiton, Kim  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight

Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Mitchell, Carol  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John

Takhar, Harinder S.  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tory, John  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Yakabuski, John  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Horwath, Andrea  
Kormos, Peter

Marchese, Rosario  
Prue, Michael

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 57; the nays are 4.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? So ordered.

## DAY OF MOURNING

### JOUR DE DEUIL

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes in recognition of Workplace Day of Mourning, followed by a moment of silence.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour):** Today is Workplace Day of Mourning, a day when we remember and honour those who have died, been injured or become ill as a result of their job.

Day of mourning is a time to reflect on the past to remember our fallen workers. It is also an opportunity to look to the future and to reaffirm our commitment to safe workplaces.

Le Jour de deuil est une occasion de méditer sur le passé et de commémorer les travailleuses et travailleurs qui ont péri. C'est aussi une occasion de regarder vers l'avenir et de réaffirmer notre détermination à garantir la sécurité au travail.

There are some who will find solace in the statistics. Great strides have been made in health and safety over the years. We should thank those who have fought for improvements and for justice for injured workers. Champions of health and safety are found in all walks of life: labour, business, the community, health and safety associations, our schools, the WSIB and government. They have made sure that injury rates have improved over the past 20 years and that Ontario leads the country in many ways. Young worker injuries in particular are down substantially.

But those same statistics tell another story. The overall rates of improvement have levelled off over the past several years. The human toll of workplace tragedy remains incalculable. The number of people injured in the workplace every year is over 300,000. That is the equiv-



alent of the entire population of my city of London. Over 100,000 are injured so seriously that they have to take time off work. Injury and occupational disease cost lives every year. The human toll is incalculable. No job is worth a life; no job is worth an injury. Every statistic is a life's story: their hopes, their dreams, shattered by injury or death; their loved ones—sons, daughters, parents, friends—touched by tragedy.

However much has been done, there is still so much more to do. Today we remember those who have been touched by tragedy. We will honour their memory today if we take action to ensure that no further tragedies happen tomorrow. Let us rededicate ourselves to prevention.

The government of Ontario is absolutely committed to preventing injuries. If we work together—labour, business, WSIB and all members of the community—we can achieve our goal of safer workplaces. When our loved ones leave for work, they must come home safely at the end of the day. We must hold those in positions of responsibility to account, and that includes every one of us.

1420

What can you do? It could be as simple as speaking to your son and daughter about health and safety before they start that summer job. As an employer, you can make sure that you have a safety talk with your employees and listen to their safety concerns. Let us take action today so that tomorrow we do not have to remember what could have been done.

Very shortly, we will observe a moment of silence. We will remember those who have died, been injured or become ill as a result of their job. We will honour their memory if every one of us takes action to ensure that no further tragedies happen tomorrow.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** Today I join my colleagues on all sides of the House to speak on behalf of our party about this, the International Day of Mourning, as we remember the many workers who have suffered injury, illness or death while in the workplace. Today is the day when we are all reminded of the terrible human, social and economic toll that workplace illnesses, accidents and fatalities can take. Today we join with workers and employers and others to express our sincere condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed or injured in the workplace.

Today is also an important day for us as legislators, because we can reaffirm our shared commitment to the prevention of illness and injury and zero tolerance for fatalities, for health and safety has never been a partisan issue; it is a human issue, and we all bear responsibility to move forward to do what we can to prevent illness, death and injury. I know that all three parties have worked to improve health and safety in the workplace.

As a former Minister of Labour, I have experienced the sadness and the sorrow that each workplace death brings to family and friends. I can remember, as Minister of Labour, receiving a visit from Paul Kells and his

family when their 19-year-old son had been killed in the workplace, and subsequently speaking to him about his desire to set up a foundation that would prevent similar tragedies to the one his family had suffered, and of course he did set up the Safe Communities Foundation. Recently, I met with Rob Ellis, who also lost his son and is now devoting himself to ensuring that no other young person loses their life.

There are still too many Canadians who die each year as a result of injury, illness and accidents in the workplace. It is important to work in partnership to ensure that our workplaces are healthy and safe. We need to develop programs to provide training that will prevent death, illness and injury.

At this time, as our students prepare to go into the workplace, many of them for the first time, it is important for all parents and teachers and others to inform our young people that when they go out to that summer job, they do have the right to say no, they won't do the work, if they feel they are entering an unsafe work area. It is important that our children know that they do have rights and that they can say no. We do not want anyone to put themselves in a position where it could cost them their life.

So on this day in this House, let us all renew our own personal commitment to the task of doing what we can, as individuals and collectively, to ensure that we do everything possible to eliminate future illness, injury and death.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** New Democrats, on this April 28, join with others in this Legislature in mourning the working women and men killed, butchered, slaughtered, maimed, poisoned in workplaces throughout the history of those working women and men in this province and in this country. It has been nearly a generation now that April 28 has been the day when people gather across Canada to mourn, recall and remember their sisters and brothers who lost their lives, who gave their lives, in their workplaces—whose lives were stolen from them in those workplaces.

Last year alone, in 2004, pallbearers carried the bodies of 328 Ontario workers whose lives were taken from them in their workplaces. They carried the bodies of 328 working men and women to their graves. Another 357,000-plus sought compensation for work-related diseases from any number of workplaces. Clearly some industries and some workplaces are more dangerous than others. The construction and building trades, with about 6% of the workforce, represent about 23% of all fatal occupational injuries in Canada. Missing from the record are thousands: among those an estimated 6,000 workers killed by cancer, lung disease and other ailments all attributed to toxic substance exposure in their workplaces.

So today we commit ourselves to mourning the dead but to fighting for the living, because if we truly honour those dead, we have to commit ourselves to fighting for

the living. To do that, governments have to act. We all know that unionized workplaces are safer workplaces, and that's why New Democrats are firm, consistent and adamant that every worker in this province has a right to belong to a union, including agricultural workers, and that all workers, not just some, have the right to join that union by virtue of card-based certification.

We need better legislation that recognizes occupational causes of disease and gives better protections. Nearly 10% of all cancer cases are the result of workers being exposed to hazardous materials in the places where they go to work to make their modest incomes, to support their families and to make their contribution to their community and to the economy. Because toxins linger in the body, their families and friends are also at risk.

When a worker dies of cancer after years of exposure to workplace hazards, that's as much a death in the workplace as the worker whose life is stolen from him at that job site. There has to be a real consequence for employers who allow this to happen, and that's why New Democrats in Ottawa are committed to criminalizing the workplace violence imposed upon workers by bad bosses who put profits before the health and safety of those workers.

There has to be a real push to get toxic substances out of the workplace, and there have got to be real protections for working women and men and their families. We've got to ensure that workers have a real right to refuse unsafe work. The right to refuse unsafe work is no right at all if that worker doesn't know what constitutes unsafe work or if, in this diverse community of Canada where English is not the first language—dare I say it? I suspect it's not for the majority of people in certain parts of this country—the right to refuse unsafe work isn't communicated in the first language of that worker, or when that right isn't reinforced when the worker knows full well that to exercise that right will not result in penalties being imposed or in consequences flowing afterwards.

Especially for young workers, the most vulnerable workers—teenagers on work sites during the course of summer jobs—the knowledge of what constitutes unsafe work, and information and education about the right to refuse unsafe work, has got to become an integral part of every high school curriculum in this province.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act has been in effect for just about a quarter of a century now. We don't need any more time or any more studies to figure out what has to be done. We just need a firm resolve and a strong, clear commitment to ensuring that every worker in this province has a right to return home, perhaps more tired, but as healthy as he or she was when they went to work first thing in the morning.

**The Speaker:** Would all members and guests please rise to observe a moment of silence in observance of Workers' Memorial Day.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

1430

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Today's front-page headline in the St. Thomas Times-Journal, the hometown paper of the Minister of Agriculture, says, "Liberals Robbing Taxpayers." When you see this headline, you think possibly they could be talking about the Liberal Adscam in Ottawa. Then you think, no; maybe it's about the illegal health tax the Liberals are imposing, the McGuinty health tax. But in fact, when you go further, you see that it says, "Elgin county councillors blasted the province Tuesday, accusing Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government of 'robbing' \$3.7 million from area ratepayers."

Minister, I can't ask the Minister of Agriculture why he is failing his residents, so I'll ask you. Why are you forcing a 20% property tax increase on Elgin county residents?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I know the Leader of the Opposition has been on this attack this past week, but we are very proud of the new municipal funding formula we've come up with. That formula is fairer. It is more equitable. It deals with the unusual police costs in some municipalities. It deals with the additional social programs in some municipalities. The last system, quite simply, wasn't fair. Many municipalities had to retain consultants for their treasurers to figure out what the system was based on. We've come up with a system that pays each municipality at least the same amount they got last year, that in total is 6% more than was given last year, and that has a transition fund of \$233 million to deal with the reconciliations for 2003, 2004 and the new costs.

**Mr. Tory:** Again, they're all wrong and the minister and every other minister is right. Instead of hiring consultants, now they'll be hiring insolvency experts on your watch.

We have now asked 45 questions of this Liberal government on why they're hurting Ontario cities and towns, and they refuse to provide any answers at all. Last week the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex said he would be "screaming from the hilltops" if he thought his area was going to lose millions. The Chatham Daily News says today that municipal officials are trying—unsuccessfully so far, I might add—to set up a meeting to discuss what they estimate to be a \$13-million shortfall. We're still waiting for a whisper, let alone a scream, from the member.

Minister, I can't ask the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex why he's been so silent, so I'll ask you. Why are you forcing double-digit property tax increases on people in Chatham-Kent?



**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** It is absolutely fascinating to get a question from the Leader of the Opposition, from a party that did everything in its eight years in power to ruin the municipal world and municipalities by down-loading services, by causing great tax increases clear across this province, by not providing the necessary infrastructure funding so that municipalities could be looked after.

Earlier this week we made the COMRIF announcement, which will provide \$400 million in capital grants to municipalities clear across this province. There's a great need out there. There was a total of \$2 billion worth of applications. Nobody can deny that the need is there, but the need is there because that party, when it was in power, did absolutely nothing but download on municipalities and the municipal taxpayer.

**Mr. Tory:** We did get some screaming—from the minister, not from the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex. Of course we got some screaming, but no answer.

Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley is musing about taking down the provincial flag to get the attention of this McGuinty Liberal government over what he calls “an injustice.” Sarnia is set to lose every penny—all \$230,000—in annual funding under your so-called fairer program. Lambton county will also lose all \$515,000 in annual funding, and yet the Liberal member for Sarnia–Lambton is absolutely silent. Again, Minister, I can only ask that the member for Sarnia–Lambton join us in fighting for her constituents, asking the questions she should be asking. But my question is for you. Why are you forcing people in Sarnia–Lambton to make up almost \$750,000 every year because of your cuts?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** If we were still using the old formula, which nobody could understand, which was totally unfair, then places like Caledon, which that member represents, would get \$1.2 million less. Kawartha Lakes, which another member in his caucus represents, would get \$2.7 million less. Port Colborne, which the municipal affairs critic represents, would get \$1 million less. Wasaga Beach would get \$765,000 less. Smiths Falls would get \$568,000 less. I could go on and on.

The bottom line is this: Municipalities are getting \$233 million more in one-time transition and reconciliation funding, plus the annual funding is going up by 6.1%, or \$38 million per year. We're proud of that program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.

**Mr. Tory:** My question is again to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We're now up to 47 questions, and not once have you answered with respect to those people who are going to pay a huge price because of your unfair program.

We have the city of Kingston—one that's well known to you, Minister—and it's going to lose \$3.4 million in annual funding under what your Premier calls his good-news program. According to your hometown paper, Kingston Mayor Harvey Rosen has already complained about changes to your new program and the loss of money to Kingston. Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus

chair Bob Sweet: “The Minister of Municipal Affairs”—that's you, by the way—“said the new formula would create winners and losers. The biggest losers will be our taxpayers.”

Minister, will you join my call for a fairer deal for residents of Kingston and the rest of eastern Ontario? Stand up and do it.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** We have a fairer deal for all of the municipalities across this province, because they are getting 6.1%, or \$38 million, more. Lambton county is getting a 14% increase; Huron county, a 16% increase; Perth county, a 16% increase; Essex county, a 90% increase. I could go on and on.

Our system is fairer and deals with those extra costs that municipalities have for social services and with the extra policing costs, which can vary as much as \$90 per head to \$600 per head in this province. That simply isn't fair. It deals with northern and smaller rural municipalities to make sure that they are dealt with fairly. This program is fairer. It will put more money into the hands of the municipal world here in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Tory:** When we have all the wardens of eastern Ontario saying that the taxpayers are in line for, and I quote, “significant increases in future property tax bills,” and we have you, I'll take them, 10 times out of 10.

The counties in Peterborough will lose more than \$750,000 in annual funding under your so-called McGuinty fairer program. County treasurer Bryce McLean says that your new program “did not help fund ... costs at the county level.” To the member for Peterborough, who's not right in front of us at the moment, I say he should be joining us in the fight for a fairer program. Many of these people are residents in his riding, and they will be making up the \$750,000. Minister, why are you forcing those residents in the Peterborough counties to make up the \$750,000? Why are you doing it?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** In addition to Peterborough getting a family health team and a hospital, I might note that it is also getting \$1.22 million more this year under the new program, and Belleville is getting a 9% increase under the new program. As a matter of fact, municipalities in eastern Ontario are getting \$143.4 million under the new program. That's a \$16.9-million increase, or 11.8%, over last year.

We're proud of that program. It will stand the test of time, and the reason for that is because it's a much fairer system than the one you had in place.

1440

**Mr. Tory:** Lots of people, including Councillor Peter Chirico from North Bay, have figured this out. I'll quote him from the North Bay Nugget. He says he has “grave concerns” about the so-called fairer deal you're talking about. Your program will slash \$3.1 million in annual funding from North Bay, and the budget chief of North Bay said, “It does not look good whatsoever by 2008.”

In other words, why don't you lift the veil of your one-time funding and your cash advances for future years and tell us the truth, which is that there is a \$3.1-million hole that the taxpayers are going to have to fill? That is \$136

per household per year. Why is your member for Nipissing being silent? Why are you forcing North Bay residents to pay \$136 per year per household? Why are you doing that?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me put it this way: We had a member from Nipissing in this House. For six years he was the Premier of the province, and he did very little for North Bay. Within the last month alone, North Bay has gotten a new hospital that the former Premier couldn't deliver. Just this Monday, I was in North Bay for an announcement and actual payment of \$45 million for a new water filtration plant.

Let me tell you—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased to see that the Leader of the Opposition is applauding this, because we're doing something for North Bay, we're doing something for the municipal world, which your former government didn't do for eight years. You downloaded upon the people of Ontario and you downloaded upon the property taxpayers of Ontario.

#### GREENBELT

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto—Danforth):** Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the failings of your greenbelt plan are upon us, as predicted. Six weeks ago, you were boasting that your greenbelt would be a cornerstone of the new regional plan to stop urban sprawl. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because your government failed to include south Simcoe in the greenbelt, developers are now finding new and creative ways to jump over it, including making huge donations of infrastructure money with no strings attached to target communities.

Minister, it is the Wild West of development and land speculation in south Simcoe. Developers are submitting plans to build stand-alone towns of 60,000 people and more on prime farmland—better farmland than you included in the greenbelt. What are you doing about it?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** Let me first of all thank the member very much for her question and thank her and the progressive wing of her party for voting in favour of the greenbelt; I know that the regressive wing couldn't.

Let me tell what you we've done with respect to Simcoe county. At the AMO conference last year, I called the leadership of Simcoe county together for a meeting in Ottawa. It was jointly decided at that point in time that we would do a study as to the environmental effects and a planning study for the area. That was confirmed later on at a meeting that was held in Barrie just before Christmas last year. Funding was put aside by both the province and the municipalities in the area to make sure that study was done. The study is currently being done, both from an environmental viewpoint and from a planning viewpoint, and we are awaiting the results of that study.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I think there is feedback here. Those who have BlackBerries or whatever electronics, will you please turn them off—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** —except for the member from St. Catharines. His doesn't feed back.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Churley:** I guess you're assuming it's a BlackBerry.

Minister, developers and speculators are engaged in a feeding frenzy right now on prime agricultural farmlands of south Simcoe. Right now, it's happening. Just this week, a major developer offered to purchase an option on future sewage capacity at Bradford West Gwillimbury in the southernmost part of Simcoe county. Developers are hunting cash-strapped municipalities with risk-free deals for infrastructure upgrades. They are actively participating in infrastructure planning and decision-making in secret behind closed doors. As predicted, your greenbelt has failed to stop urban sprawl, as I told you. But for the benefit of south Simcoe residents and the future of Lake Simcoe, will you today ensure that Bill 136 at least, your Places to Grow Act, will end this leapfrog development and planning chaos unfolding in south Simcoe county right now?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me say once again: We are involved in a joint planning study with the county of Simcoe. As a matter of fact, we've committed two-and-a-quarter million dollars, and the municipalities are providing three-quarters of a million dollars, to deal exactly with the issues you are talking about. As to what kind of developments should take place, what areas should be protected, what areas should be part of the greenbelt, and all of those particular issues, as well as the environmental issues, particularly as it relates to the waste water runoff into Lake Simcoe and the situation connected with that, we are doing that right now. This government was very proactive in meeting with the leadership there because it realized something had to be done. We started that process last summer, and we're awaiting the result of that report right now.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, get your head out of the sand and listen to what people are saying out there. Residents and farmers who are speaking out to protect their communities and farmland are being threatened and intimidated by developers and their high-priced Bay Street lawyers. I've seen it happen myself. A developer just wrote to the general government committee telling members we should discount the deputations of south Simcoe citizens who are trying to protect their farmland and rural way of life. They practically call them liars in this letter. If your Places to Grow Act does not stop the development rampage in south Simcoe, it will have failed.

Minister, again I give you the opportunity to stand up, stop your excuses and say you will stand up to the developers and speculators today, and ensure that Bill 136 protects prime farmland and communities of south Simcoe from your greenbelt-induced sprawl.



**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** I refer the matter with respect to Bill 136 to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I'm delighted to answer the question. I wish the member had directed the question to me earlier, because I could share with her that we have designated the city of Barrie as an urban growth centre to accommodate the future population and growth needs in the Simcoe region. I could share with the member the transportation investments and linkages we are planning to connect GO train extension. I know the member has not been supportive of those kinds of investments in the past, but our government has taken a leadership role to expand transit options right across the region. I know the member opposite, when she was in government, would have had the opportunity to protect valuable green space, but it was the courage of this government, of this Premier, to introduce a greenbelt, unprecedented land-use—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Acting Premier. Last November the Minister of Children and Youth Services promised that Ontario would be the country's leader in child care. She said, "We need to be a leader in early child care development today." But yesterday, we found out who the real leader is: Manitoba, not Ontario. Tomorrow, Manitoba will become the first province to sign a child care agreement with the federal government. Thanks to your weak leadership and broken promises, Ontario is still without a deal. Acting Premier, what happened to the promises your minister made for child care? Where is the non-profit child care system Ontario families so desperately need?

1450

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The rhetoric of the honourable member notwithstanding, she had the opportunity, because she was in this House yesterday, to hear a very forceful presentation by the Minister of Children and Youth Services on the very matter at hand. In that—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Take the opportunity, George.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'd be happy to. Maybe the honourable member could get a question, and I'll have a chance to answer from—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The member from Trinity-Spadina, come to order. It would be helpful if you directed the answer to the Speaker.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The highlight of the answer, as was brought forward in the House yesterday by the Minister of Children and Youth Services, was that, for the first time in 10 years in this province, we have a government that has invested in creating new spaces. We created 4,000 new spaces. We think that is a very significant beginning. Unlike the honourable member, who chooses to manufacture negativity every day in this

Legislature, we believe that we're making significant progress in enhancing the quality of services for Ontario's children.

**Ms. Horwath:** I'll just remind the Acting Premier that, in fact, the minister also admitted that it was federal dollars that were being invested, not provincial dollars, and it was you who promised \$300 million of new provincial funding, you who promised to be accountable for federal child care money and you who promised to lead the country on child care. But yesterday your government voted against your own promises on child care at the very same moment that, ironically, Manitoba became the new leader in child care by saying, "Yes, child care is vital to our families, our communities and our economy."

How far your government has fallen since promising Ontario's children a Best Start. You broke your promises again yesterday when you voted against your own words. Your rhetoric has not produced a federal deal. It has not produced a not-for-profit child care system rooted in the QUAD principles. It has produced nothing at all. When can we expect Ontario to follow Manitoba's lead? Where is Ontario's deal?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Ontario doesn't have to stand back and wait and watch and follow Manitoba's lead, because we're already leading. Our initiative with respect to a Best Start means that we don't have to wait for those circumstances. We're moving forward. We've got demonstration sites in Timiskaming, Lambton, Kent and Hamilton. We've already made the point that we've created more than 4,000 spots since coming to office. This is evidence that we're a government of action, notwithstanding the fiscal challenges that we confront as a result of the inaccuracies of the party that preceded us in office.

In respect of the important commitments we've made to Ontario's children, we are a government that has demonstrated significant movement on this issue. For the honourable member to have missed that and to have looked to another border with a view toward thinking that they're a leader, demonstrates that this is an honourable member who focuses on the half-empty cup.

**Ms. Horwath:** Not only does Manitoba have a deal, it has a real plan for not-for-profit child care that is supported by the experts. The Manitoba Child Care Association says it supports Manitoba's strategy for federal child care money, but the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has condemned your plan, saying it won't produce the kind of child care system we need. It says that it's not seamless, it's not educational, it's not universal and it's not accountable for taxpayers' dollars. Acting Premier, where is your plan for child care? When are we going to catch up to Manitoba?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member makes the point about catching up to Manitoba, and I think this helps to emphasize why it has been so important, on the part of our government, to have a Premier who's leading in the challenge of getting the additional resources that are required, because we want to be in a position to be able to make those investments that are as

strenuous. Notwithstanding that, we've moved forward and we're making progress in these areas.

What are our demonstration sites on Best Start about? Early and ongoing screening of newborns to identify needs and support; early identification of specialized hearing and language and communication needs; a comprehensive 18-month well-baby check-up; a growing number of child care spaces; subsidies; a new capital building and renovations are needed; rapid expansion of child care spaces for children in junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. All of these things woven together are a demonstration of a coordinated program that will be good for Ontario's children.

### PROVINCIAL REVENUE

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** My question is for the Acting Premier, in the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Finance. I asked the Minister of Finance in this place some days ago about the percentage increase in spending in the past fiscal year, and he was unable to answer. Today I want to ask about the revenue side and some disturbing words that are going around about what has happened in the past fiscal year on the revenue side in Ontario. The third-largest source of revenue for the government of Ontario is corporations tax, and your government brought in a massive tax increase on the corporations side last May, anticipating increased revenues from that taxation of something in excess of \$1.6 billion. It appears that that has not happened. The reason it hasn't happened should be obvious to you: As you increase taxes, you decrease the stimulus to economic activity, and corporations can book their profits elsewhere. My question is this: What is the revised anticipated corporations tax revenue for the past fiscal year?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I'd just say to the public that in a very short period of time, right here in the Legislature—not at Magna, not at General Motors or some auto plant, but right here in the Legislature—the Minister of Finance will report on the finances of the province and outline the plans for the future. I would just suggest to the member: Be here in your seat, right here in the Legislature and, in the very near future, the people of Ontario will see the final results. Just as has historically happened—with the exception of that government—when a budget is presented, the facts will be laid out here in the Legislature, as they should be. I think the member will find that informative.

**Mr. Flaherty:** So now we know they don't know the figure on the spending side for the past fiscal year, and they don't know the figure on the corporations tax side as well.

We know this: We know that Ontario's real GDP for 2004 was 2.6% and lags Canada's average of 2.8%. We know that it's getting even worse now for the people of Ontario and the businesses of Ontario as we look

forward. We know now that for this year, 2005, growth in Ontario's real GDP will trail all provinces except Newfoundland, according to Toronto-Dominion Bank: 2.2%, compared to the prediction of 2.8% for our country.

This is what Ontario has fallen to under your government: high spending, low revenues. Our taxes are now the third-highest in the entire country, after only Newfoundland and Quebec. Will you come to the House next week, ask the Minister of Finance, get the Deputy Minister of Finance to give you the number, and report to the people of Ontario about the past fiscal year's corporations tax revenues?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** The public should be aware that, the last year they were in office, the real GDP in the province of Ontario went up 1.3%. Luckily, we are now seeing growth. As a matter of fact, I think just last week, if I'm not mistaken—you may have missed it—the budget predicted 2.3% growth. I think the numbers came out last week at 2.6%.

Again, I would say that, like any responsible organization, we are doing exactly as we laid out in our financial planning. We will be presenting our budget in the very near future, he will see the final numbers at that time, and, I would just say to the member opposite, it won't be in some auto plant; it will be here in the democratically elected Legislature, where we all will have an opportunity to see it and to debate it. Again I'd say that he may not understand the numbers well, but last year the budget predicted 2.3% growth and it has come in at 2.6%. Their last year in office: 1.3%.

### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** A question to the Acting Premier: Premier McGuinty's latest effort to bring down the Paul Martin government is a Web site and a series of pamphlets called StrongOntario.ca. My question is, has the government submitted these materials to the Auditor General to ensure that they meet your rules and standards, laid out in your legislation, regarding non-partisan advertising?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** To the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Again, I think the member may not realize the legislation. If the member remembers the legislation and has read it, it deals with paid advertising and it deals with literature distributed by bulk mail. It does not deal with the particular instance that you're talking about.

### 1500

In terms of the Auditor General, what the Auditor General has said to us is that, until his office is ready to deal with material, he does not want the bill proclaimed. We are awaiting his staffing up, and then we will proclaim the bill. But I would say that the bill doesn't apply



to this. The member should look carefully at the bill. This material is not part of that piece of legislation.

**Mr. Kormos:** Acting Premier, I read the bill carefully, but I also carefully looked at the Web site—which is reaching out, it purports, to thousands of people—and the pamphlets that are associated with their Web site. It's glossy, it's rife with commentary from the Premier, from Mr. Sorbara, and it's as partisan as can be, because it advocates defeating Paul Martin and the federal Liberals.

How do you justify somehow indicating—

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** A week ago you supported it, and now it's partisan.

**Mr. Kormos:**—that this isn't what your legislation, which was designed to control partisan advertising—how dare you suggest—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. Member from Eglinton—Lawrence, will you come to order, please.

Wrap up in 10 seconds for me, please.

**Mr. Kormos:** How do you suggest that this material shouldn't be subjected to the review of the Auditor General? Or is this in fact the loophole that you can drive the Mack truck through?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** First, on the details of the bill, this isn't included. I would hope, and I think, all parties here in the Legislature are supportive of an approach by the province of Ontario to ensure that the people of Ontario get their fair share of federal revenue.

I would say two things. One is that the bill doesn't cover this. This approach that we are taking is a non-partisan approach designed to articulate Ontario's position that the federal government must respond to Ontario's real, demonstrated gap in funding from the federal government. I would actually hope that we could count on the third party to lend their shoulder to the wheel in trying to bring some fairness to the province rather than criticizing the effort—which, I might add, is an effort that falls quite within the piece of legislation that we have.

#### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke—Lakeshore):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. You recently announced the launch of the JobsNow pilot project to help people move from working for welfare to working for a living. Helping those who are currently on Ontario Works find and keep sustainable jobs is good social policy, good economic policy and good fiscal policy. Based on the principle that different people need different assistance to find those jobs, we need to match the right people with the right jobs.

There's a serious need for a program like JobsNow in my own riding of Etobicoke—Lakeshore, where I've been working with my community to develop job opportunities, strengthen community resource linkages and get more people working. Minister, what can I tell my community is the best way for them to try to get a program like JobsNow working in Etobicoke—Lakeshore?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate this question. I think this is a very relevant question for all communities in Ontario. We did start with pilot sites for this program in JobsNow. The first place we went to was the city of Toronto. Toronto chose not to participate; at least, I hope it's "Not at this time." We hope to be able to go back to Toronto very quickly and show them some of the remarkable success that the balance of the pilot sites has discovered so far. We have over 1,000 job orders now in a hidden market.

If I may, the key here is that when we are working with this company that is partnering with us, what they do that is significantly different is that they actually go out into the marketplace, through their partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, and look for the hidden job market, for those companies that don't post jobs but have them available. They then assist in matching the people who are on welfare for more than 12 months. It's working out very well; it is still early.

**Ms. Broten:** There are people living in Etobicoke—Lakeshore who are anxious to get back into the workforce. I saw this first-hand at my annual community information services and job fair last November, which was attended by job seekers, employers and service providers, with a view to helping match employees with potential jobs. Given the length of time the pilot project is anticipated to run, is there an opportunity in the future for residents of Etobicoke—Lakeshore and across Toronto to be part of JobsNow, so that they can start working in a job that's right for them?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I think there may be some opportunity. We can work with the contract we have already initiated. We are prepared to do that. I am prepared to speak to the city of Toronto again, and maybe the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore can join me in that discussion.

What I do know is that there are a number of people in Toronto who have been on Ontario Works for more than 12 months. We know that the lion's share of people who are on Ontario Works want to work. When we are looking at an innovative project like this, we know that so far it is working. There are jobs that are being found, and the skills set this company is bringing to bear in this area is actually finding the jobs and doing the matching. Quite frankly, in any area in Ontario where they have significant social service costs, to the extent that they have come to Ontario for help in this matter, it behooves our municipalities to look seriously at any opportunity that can help them get people back to work.

#### HIGHWAY 417

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, this is an issue of vital importance to people in my riding. The previous government did a great job of getting the 417 extended to Arnprior. With the com-

pletion of that highway to Arnprior, everything seems to have stalled.

There are two things you need for an area to grow: You need a skilled workforce and you need infrastructure. When can we expect an announcement on the further extension of the 417?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I am surprised that the member made the comment that their government did a great job. They had nine years to complete this highway and they didn't do anything about it. Now he thinks all of a sudden their government did a great job.

I want to assure the member that we are putting \$1 billion every year into highway expansions. We will take your suggestion into consideration and see where the priorities are.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** That's a very good non-answer, Minister. However, my county of Renfrew is taking a serious hit with the Ontario municipal partnership fund formula that you guys have come up with. It can't absorb many more blows. Rural Ontario is hurting. What we need to develop is an assured transportation infrastructure. The municipalities have done a great job of highlighting the importance of this issue. Will you, Minister, commit to the people in Renfrew county today that you will see that this extension gets priority in this budget?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** First, I am sure the member knows that highway expansion takes years of planning. If they had done any planning at all, we would have proceeded with this highway by now.

I also want to tell this member—maybe he doesn't know—that Pembroke is getting about \$418,000 more under the formula that we applied. If he would start reading this, maybe he would start asking a little bit more intelligent questions.

## SCHOOL CLOSURES

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question. The member for Trinity–Spadina.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** Rosie, speak up.

**The Speaker:** In the alternative, I will tell the minister what to do. I would rather he didn't speak up.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** Thank you, Speaker.

Minister of Education, six northern schools are scheduled to close in a matter of weeks. Earlier this week, you announced a review of the closures, but the closings seem to be a foregone conclusion. The school board is moving ahead with their plans. Yesterday, they began their work to make space for students losing their schools. In a few days, I am told, they will begin moving equipment out.

Minister, if the proposed review is meant to save these schools, why are school boards proceeding to close them?

1510

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Again, the Lakehead board is on record with their intentions, but they also have to contend with a provincial policy that changed. We did ask that board, as we did every other board in the province, to observe a moratorium. They chose to proceed and they now have to go through a procedure to confirm or change their decisions. It's a fair one that's treating the school board with respect. Frankly, it's also treating the students with even more respect, to make absolutely sure the students in the Lakehead board will be in a position to benefit from new provincial policies.

Former education minister Dave Cooke has already been in contact with people in the area and is going to be visiting it very shortly. He has already started to conduct his review. I have every confidence that he is going to be able to come up with a fair assessment of what it is the students of the Lakehead, Thunder Bay and area will need.

**Mr. Marchese:** Minister, you made a promise to protect northern schools. You have not flowed the pecunia to protect them. In fact, Ernie Eves, in his dying days, admittedly, invested more new money in small schools with declining enrolment than you and your Premier.

Now you promise parents and community members a fair and impartial review, but you haven't released the terms of the review, and the plans to close the schools are moving ahead as scheduled. Will you release the terms of the school closing review and ensure that the board stops all plans to close the schools until you personally approve those closures?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** I think the member opposite may be aware—he has had some time in government—that they closed 155 schools in their time in government, so I think they've encountered this question before. The school boards in this province have legislative authority to close schools or to open new schools, but they're subject to provincial guidelines.

We saw what Dr. Rozanski had said, and we said, "That's not good enough. There has to be more protection for rural schools and northern schools." Last year, we invested \$31 million above what the Rozanski report said. We have provided for a fair system of value in schools.

I would say to the member opposite that he may wish to promote that idea all over the province because, simply put, we think we finally have the right kind of balance to make sure that students get the respect they deserve and to make sure that school boards are fully participant in this. We're not the last government, trampling all over them. We're not the government of the social contract, taking rights away. But we will find solutions—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member from Trinity–Spadina, come to order, please.



## GROWTH PLANNING

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Minister, you've been given the task of building strong, prosperous communities with healthy environments and an excellent quality of life all across Ontario. A plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe area is the logical first choice since this area will be expecting a population growth of close to four million people and about two million jobs over the next 30 years. Your draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe seems to address where and how that specific region should grow and how the infrastructure investments should be prioritized to support those specific growth areas. The draft plan also indicates how you plan to protect those areas within the greater Golden Horseshoe that provide food, water and recreation. Minister, why is growth planning so important to the McGuinty government?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** Let me put the context to the answer. It's a very good question. By the year 2031, we expect some four million new residents here in the province of Ontario and over two million jobs to be created. Those kinds of growth forecasts will have enormous implications for the kinds of public infrastructure investments we need to make, as well as to augment the importance of building healthy and complete communities.

It's critical that this region called the greater Golden Horseshoe continue to be economically competitive and offer a high quality of life. That's why we need a solid growth plan. By determining where and how growth should occur, a growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe would help reduce sprawl, make transit a more viable option, reduce gridlock, improve our air quality, protect the environment and other valuable natural resources. At the same time, we want to avoid the kind of growth Ontarians have told us they don't want, that increases gridlock, chews up valuable green spaces, drives away investments. So the plan that we've introduced will create jobs, attract investment, protect valuable natural areas and ultimately improve our quality of life.

**Mr. Wong:** Can you elaborate on specific steps the government is taking to ensure that municipalities have been a key part of developing this plan?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** The growth plan will provide broad strategic direction on growth-related and cross-boundary issues on which municipalities have, for a very long time, asked for provincial leadership. In fact, I was really gratified that, during the Bill 136 committee hearings, we had municipal leadership: the mayor of Hamilton, the mayor of Burlington and the mayor of Oshawa. The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford reminded me that Mayor Hamilton from Barrie came and spoke about the need for provincial leadership to assist municipal leaders in developing the kind of growth legislation and growth planning that will allow it to align long-range planning with capital investments.

We are working with our municipal partners to develop this kind of a plan, and we're going to continue as we develop sub-area growth strategies. Those municipal partners are working hand in hand with the McGuinty government after a long, long absence of provincial leadership. Thank God.

## FABRY DISEASE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** My question is for the Minister of Health. It has been over 18 months since the issue of permanent funding for Fabry disease was brought to your attention. Since then, you have ignored desperate cries for help from people such as 28-year-old Darren Nesbit of Sarnia, and you have reneged on your written promise to Donna Strauss, of July 2004, where you say, "I will make certain of coverage for Fabry." Instead, you hide behind the common drug review process, a process that I, as a former health minister, know was not intended to deal with catastrophic drugs. I ask you today: Will you heed the desperate cries for help that I continue to receive and you do, and commit to permanent funding for enzyme replacement therapy for Fabry patients?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The honourable member's attempts at revisionist history notwithstanding, the answer that I've had the opportunity to convey so many times in this House continues to be, I believe, the appropriate one.

I've had the opportunity to work with my provincial colleagues on this. We're of the view that the Common Drug Review is the appropriate place to be reviewing this. In fact, the company, after the first round of common drug review analysis, asked that the product be looked at with a different set of data in mind. That's what's going on currently. In this circumstance, we think it's wholly appropriate that companies which voluntarily began to supply these drugs to patients in Ontario should continue with that supply until this process has come to its conclusion. In the meantime, we're also working hard with the federal government on the development of an orphan drug strategy which may go further in this area. But in the interim, I believe that we've taken the appropriate steps in the province of Ontario.

**Mrs. Witmer:** On March 30, when I asked about 28-year-old Darren Nesbit from Sarnia, this minister said he would ensure "that the product is ... available to that patient."

I want to read an e-mail I received from Darren yesterday: "Just writing to tell how bad I feel right now. My body hasn't been without treatment this long in six years. For the past few days, I have no energy to feel like a normal person. My question is, why is the health minister not helping me out? His office called, but they say he cannot help."

I ask you, Minister: Why will you not do what they have done in Alberta; that is, provide bridge or interim funding for ERT until such time as a national policy on orphan disease and catastrophic drugs is in place?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** That is about the third time in this House that that honourable member has raised this Alberta situation, and she has misinformed people. The circumstances that she has just said are the circumstances are not factual. We're in very close contact with my colleague the minister from Alberta, Iris Evans. Alberta is following the same process, to our very best understanding, as we are here.

The obligation is a challenging one, of course. We have sympathy for these patients. But the circumstance that has been created there—the expectation of or dependency on this treatment—is one that was started by drug companies themselves. It's inappropriate in the circumstance, until such time as the processes that they themselves have asked to be reconsidered in have come to their conclusion—that the obligation and the onus continues to lie with these companies that began these voluntary treatments.

1520

We'll continue to push these companies to fulfill the obligation that they themselves created while we determine the appropriate clinical efficacy. No drug plan can sustain—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. I have some concern about a comment you made that was unparliamentary, and I'd ask you to withdraw it.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do, Mr. Speaker.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I tried for more than six weeks to get a meeting or even a return phone call from your office about the loss of second-stage housing in Hamilton. On Tuesday I asked you what you were going to do to preserve 28 endangered units of second-stage housing for Hamilton women and their children escaping violence in their homes. You said you would go to my city the following day, April 27, and meet with Family Services Hamilton and attend to this urgent matter. Within hours of that promise, you cancelled until May 5. Why did you break your promised appointment, and how serious are you about saving these 28 units of second-stage housing?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question, because it gives me a chance once again to explain to this House that when members stand up, I would appreciate accurate information being forwarded.

This particular agency, Family Services Hamilton, receives over \$350,000 from our ministry for a whole host of programs that they deliver. I agree: This particular agency has significant issues and has had significant issues for the last several years, and that started back in 1995 or 1996, when the former government cut all their funding for second-stage housing. We came in as a government and have begun the reinstatement of funding, not just to second-stage housing for transitional support, but

across Ontario, where the lion's share of women who are fleeing abuse never even enter shelters, let alone second-stage housing. We have committed to meet with them. I'm not interested in dates for this particular member; I'm interested in the dates we are arranging with the agency. We are working directly with the agency to secure when we're meeting.

**Ms. Horwath:** The minister must have misunderstood what I was saying, because nothing I actually said was inaccurate: You didn't show up, and you're still not giving a commitment about second-stage housing units operated by Family Services Hamilton. We can't allow those units to close in Hamilton. We have a genuine crisis: 28 families who have fled life-and-death situations are about to lose their safe housing because of you. Continuing to do nothing in this particular matter will force women back to their violent partners or into homelessness with their children. Family Services Hamilton doesn't have the resources to pay for your government's election promises on second-stage housing.

Minister, why aren't you meeting with them immediately, like you promised, to deal with this urgent crisis, and why don't you just commit right now, today, to signalling to those people that you're going to fund those 28 units?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello:** My office, this ministry and in particular the regional office for that area have been working with this agency, and we will continue to do that. I can tell you that when our government gives out money to organizations, they will be strong organizations that we know will continue to deliver good services. We know that this particular agency has undergone significant governance issues over the last several years. We are intent on spending our money well. I have spoken directly with the executive director of this organization, who knows full well that we are intending to sit down and act directly. I understand that this member would like me to check with her calendar, but quite frankly, I'm interested in getting to this agency as soon as we can and endeavouring to work with them so they can continue to provide good services. We have said that before, and we will say that again.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. I hear a great deal in the media lately about identity theft. I know it's not a problem for us Liberals, because right now, nobody wants to be us. On the other hand, the Minister of Tourism and Recreation has reported to me that his BlackBerry is inundated with Internet scams that appear to want his identity. Recognizing that the Internet appears to be the weapon of choice, could you give us some information on identity theft?

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** Just for the record, I didn't write that question.



Identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America. The particular issue that the member from Prince Edward–Hastings spoke about is a relatively new phenomenon called phishing. It's a phenomenon where scam artists are actually sending fake e-mails to individuals, trying to extract consumer information, personal information. They also set up Web sites that replicate banks, financial institutions and credit card companies. My advice to consumers watching and members, if you'd like to share it with your constituents, is that a reputable bank or credit card or financial institution will never ask for personal information like PIN numbers or credit card numbers.

**Mr. Parsons:** I think I omitted the word "federal" in my second sentence, so if I could amend Hansard to include that, life would be much easier for me and others.

There appear to be certain individuals who are particularly susceptible to this type of activity, and I suspect that they're older individuals who are not Internet-savvy. I would ask what they should do to protect themselves particularly.

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** It's true that new Canadians and senior citizens in particular are vulnerable to this kind of scamming, but every citizen of our province can be a target. On Good Friday, for instance, I received a phishing e-mail at my home e-mail account asking for personal information. There was a link to a site that looked very much like a real bank site. So again I would encourage people to arm themselves with proper information and go to our ministry Web site, which is [cbs.gov.on.ca](http://cbs.gov.on.ca). I'd also ask them to get in touch with their local Rotary Club; the ABCs of Fraud is a very reputable organization that can give seminars to seniors and other community groups; or contact PhoneBusters, which is operated in conjunction with the OPP, at 1-888-495-8501.

#### EASTERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** This is a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This morning the Legislature voted unanimously in favour of a bill to create a fund for part of Ontario—eastern Ontario, with the exclusion of Ottawa—similar to the northern heritage fund, to help out these communities. These communities have a low tax assessment base, they are declining or not growing in population, they have an inordinate number of senior citizens compared to the Ontario public, and their salaries and incomes are lower, much lower in some cases, than the average in Ontario.

Mr. Minister, in changing from the CRF to your new plan, why does this area come up \$4 million short under your new plan?

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** In actual fact that is not so, and if I can find the numbers here: Eastern Ontario is getting \$16.9 million, or an 11.8% increase, under the new program and it's receiving a total of \$143.4 million.

He has raised another interesting issue, though. It's unfortunate that your government, of which you were a very prominent and highly placed individual, for eight years did absolutely nothing for many, many parts of eastern Ontario. When you consider that eastern Ontario is the oldest part of Ontario, with great infrastructure needs, with a lot of old infrastructure needs, it is really too bad that you did absolutely nothing during that period of time so that the infrastructure needs of that part of Ontario could—they should have been attended to.

The bottom line is this: They're getting more than they did under your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. Get it in in the supplementary.

**Mr. Sterling:** I'd like to talk about the \$50 million we put into Carleton University, the \$60 million that we put into the University of Ottawa, the \$200-million water protection fund that we put right across Ontario, and many of those projects were in eastern Ontario—the building of the 416. We did so much for eastern Ontario that it's unbelievable this member would not understand it.

1530

The minister talks about next year's grants to eastern Ontario. The Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus has done all the numbers. They added up what the counties were receiving, they added up what the ward tiers were receiving, they added up what the single-tier towns were receiving. Their figures show that when this plan comes to maturity in 2008, they are going to be \$3.5 million short. Why are you doing this to one of the most vulnerable places in all of Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me first of all say that we believe this plan is fairer because it deals with the inordinate police costs that some municipalities bear; it deals with the additional costs of social programs that municipalities bear. Having said that, we all know eastern Ontario needs help because during the eight years you were in power very little was done. It's interesting to note, though, that unemployment in eastern Ontario is down from 7.5% to 6.6%. As a matter of fact, in eastern Ontario, since March of last year, 27,400 new jobs have been created. Let me say this: More can be done for Ontario, more can be done for eastern Ontario, and that's exactly what this government is doing because we believe in strong communities, something your government unfortunately did not believe in.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Earlier, during members' statements, I raised a point of order with regard to a statement made by the member from Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh. In that statement, I submit to you, the member used unparliamentary language. I understand you cannot rule retroactively. I have presented you with the instant Hansard in which the member specifically stated that the leader of the official opposition used language in this House that misrepresented facts. I'm going to ask you now, Speaker, to tell the House whether in fact that is parliamentary language for future purposes, for the bene-

fit of members here, or whether it was in fact unparliamentary language.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I want to thank the member for that. I should also have said that I would only rule on what I hear at the time. If I go back to look at many things members have said, I would be ruling all day—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order—about some very unparliamentary things members have said. Yes, the language you show me, of course, could be unparliamentary, but I cannot rule retroactively on things that have happened. I thank the member for bringing it to my attention. That is not a point of order.

## PETITIONS

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas many owners of seasonal trailers kept at campgrounds have raised their concerns over the impact on property taxes on seasonal trailers and the unfairness of imposing a new tax on persons who use minimum municipal services;

“Whereas this new tax will discourage business and tourism opportunities in Ontario and will cause many families to give up their vacation trailers altogether;

“Whereas the administration of this tax will require a substantial investment in staff, time and resources across the province of Ontario;

“Whereas some representatives of the recreational vehicle industry, campground providers and trailer owners have suggested an alternative sticker or tag system to establish fees for seasonal trailers;

“Therefore, we the undersigned respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Parliament of Ontario immediately abandon the assessment and taxation of recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis in 2004, and that the government of Ontario consult with all stakeholders regarding the development of a fair and reasonable sticker or tag fee that would apply to recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis.”

As I am in support of this, I will sign it.

### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I'm proud to submit these petitions from high school students representing Ottawa-Orléans, Ottawa South, Nepean-Carleton, Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Ottawa-Vanier, Ottawa West-Nepean and Lanark-Carleton:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas cigarette addiction is a major health issue affecting the citizens of Ontario; and

“Whereas tobacco companies spend \$77 million annually on power wall advertising; and

“Whereas youths are especially susceptible to tobacco advertising; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced Bill 164 to limit smoking in Ontario; and

“Whereas we, the students of the Exposé smoke-free project, have collected 24,000 signatures from Ottawa high school students;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To support the law to make Ontario smoke-free, to act to prevent smoking in all public places and workplaces, and to ban the use of power walls.”

I'm pleased to have Alistair Butt, a page from Ottawa-Orléans, deliver these to the Clerk.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas during the 2003 election campaign, Dalton McGuinty promised to establish a standing committee on education to ensure transparency in education funding; and

“Whereas such a committee has not been established; and

“Whereas Ontario's education system is not properly funded and there is no transparency in funding;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately establish a standing committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of education funding.”

Because I strongly agree with this petition, I will be signing it.

### HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas noxious odours from the Halton Recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

“Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face threats to their health and well-being, and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

“Whereas for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment, as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton Recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force



Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue.”

I am in agreement with this, and therefore will affix my signature.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I’ve got a petition here from a group of health care workers from the Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga, a group that includes Hristo Todorov, Anton Fedyanov and Simeon Simeonov. It reads as follows:

“Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

“Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

“Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition, to extend my complete support toward it and to ask Dara to carry it for me.

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton):** This is from Mr. Albert Werry and many other people:

“Whereas the Hon. Michael Bryant is minister responsible for democratic renewal; and

“Whereas the Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General of Ontario, is elected to safeguard our justice system on behalf of the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas the ministry of our Attorney General may not be aware of the serious and important issues facing individuals involved in areas of the justice system even

though the Attorney General’s ministry is continually monitoring;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Hon. Michael Bryant, Attorney General, for his in-depth investigation of the Ontario judicial system and [to] make the public aware of his findings immediately.”

1540

#### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** I’ve got a petition here on anaphylactic students signed by a number of people, including Ana MacPherson:

“Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

“Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

“Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

“Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

“Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

“Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan.”

It’s a petition I support and I will be signing it.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John O’Toole (Durham):** I am pleased to submit this petition. The member for Lanark–Carleton was going to present one on the legal system, but I’m presenting one:

“Whereas the federal Income Tax Act at present has a minimum amount of medical expenses for which a taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit;

“Whereas the health and medical expenses of every citizen in the province of Ontario, great or small, affect their overall net income;

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government moved in their 2004 budget on May 18, 2004”—they actually did it here—“to delist publicly funded medical services such as chiropractic services, optometry examinations and physiotherapy services;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Income Tax Act remove the present minimum amount of medical expenses for which an Ontario taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit.”

I am pleased to support this in the interest of preserving health care and John Tory’s vision for Ontario.

## ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition here from a group of people in Mississauga and Toronto about banning smoking in public places in Ontario, a petition for which I'd like to express support to my colleague from Ottawa—Orléans. It read as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Whereas some 16,000 Ontarians each year die of tobacco-related causes; and

"Whereas the inhalation of direct and second-hand tobacco smoke both lead to health hazards that can ... cause preventable death; and

"Whereas more than four out of every five Ontarians do not smoke, and this large majority desires that enclosed public places in Ontario be smoke-free at all times; and

"Whereas preventing the sale of tobacco products, especially to young people, and banning the use of tobacco products in public and gathering places of all types will lower the incidence of smoking among Ontarians, and decrease preventable deaths;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Ontario Legislative Assembly enact Bill 164, and that the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care aggressively implement measures to restrict the sale and supply of tobacco to those under 25; that the display of tobacco products in retail settings be banned; that smoking be banned in enclosed public places or in workplaces, and banned on or near the grounds of public and private schools, hospitals and day nurseries; that designated smoking areas or rooms in public places be banned, and that penalties for violations of smoking laws be substantially increased."

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I'll sign it and ask Madison to carry it for me.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark—Carleton):** I have a petition from some students at All Saints High School in Kanata in the city of Ottawa who have been working very strongly on anti-smoking initiatives, because they understand the detrimental effects to the health of the people of Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke is the number one preventable killer in Ontario today, and there is overwhelming evidence that retail displays of tobacco products (power walls), in plain view of children and adults increase the use of tobacco, we have collected 862 postcards signed by persons from our school and community supporting a smoke-free Ontario in 2005 and banning the use of power walls which promote tobacco use;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to make all public places and workplaces smoke-free and ban the use of power walls. The city of Ottawa has been smoke-free since August 2001. All of Ontario deserves clean air."

I congratulate all of these students.

## ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's my pleasure to rise today to add my voice to those reading petitions to protect anaphylactic students, and the petition reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved....

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

This petition comes from a group of students in the Meadowvale and Lisgar areas of Mississauga. I'm pleased to sign it, to support it, and to ask Paula to carry it for me.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 55, I'd like to rise to give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Monday, May 2, in the afternoon, Bill 183 and Bill 92.

On Tuesday, May 3, in the afternoon, Bill 186 and Bill 92.

On Wednesday, May 4, we're going to have an opposition day.

On Thursday, May 5, Bill 176.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE SECURITY AND  
INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES ACT, 2005LOI DE 2005 SUR LES SERVICES PRIVÉS  
DE SÉCURITÉ ET D'ENQUÊTE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 21, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 159, Loi révisant la Loi sur les enquêteurs privés et les gardiens et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi de 1999 sur le Tribunal d'appel en matière de permis.



**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I understand that at this stage it is the official opposition who have the time to speak.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to participate in the debate on this bill before us. The Private Investigators and Security Guards Act currently is being replaced by this bill. At the outset, I want to express my support for the bill. I certainly will be voting for it, and I believe I will be joined by my colleagues in the official opposition.

I believe all of us can support updating this important framework for ensuring that the private investigators act does in fact do for us what we expect it to do. It has not been revised since 1966, and we know that the world has changed dramatically since then. I believe in those days basically what we were dealing with were what were called watchmen. The environment within which security guards work today is very different. The kind of work they're expected to take on is considerably more challenging and certainly more dangerous. As a result, we need in place a legislative framework to ensure that those who are in the business of selling the services of private investigators and security guards are appropriately regulated. That is essentially what this bill does.

1550

I do want to give credit to my colleague Mr. Garfield Dunlop, who brought before this House his own private member's bill some time ago. That was Bill 88, entitled the Private Investigators and Security Guards Amendment Act, 2004. That was on June 1, 2004. That bill, I believe, was in many ways perhaps even more comprehensive than the bill that the government has laid before us today. I would have preferred, frankly, to have this comprehensive nature of Mr. Dunlop's bill incorporated into this government bill. However, that is not the case, and so we're going to deal with this legislation as it is before us.

Clearly, what we have in this legislation are licensing requirements that are imposed and procedures that are put in place for revoking and suspending existing licences, subject, of course, to appeal provisions, and that's appropriate. But there needs to be a mechanism through which government has the authority to repeal existing licences if, in fact, the business is not being carried out in a responsible way.

This bill, as well, contains offences and regulatory requirements and a process for dealing with complaints from the public. As with many of these industries, often the problem is that there isn't an appropriate mechanism through which a member of the public can register a complaint and then see appropriate action taken to be satisfied. As a result of that, you know well, Speaker, that often complaints aren't brought and the authorities don't know what is being done within the industry that may well be inappropriate. So, again, I support those provisions that are contained in this legislation.

The minister has taken upon himself the responsibility to make regulations, to set out a code of conduct for private investigators and security guards. Again, in that

regard, we would have preferred to see those regulations. We expect that we will certainly, as legislators, have an opportunity to participate in that regulation-making, or at least have an opportunity to have input into what those regulations ultimately look like.

In large part, I believe that the industry itself is highly responsible. I know that the minister has responded not only to the public in terms of this issue but also in terms of the industry itself. The responsible players in the industry understand and recognize the importance of this legislation and of having a meaningful framework. No doubt, they will be working co-operatively with the minister to ensure that whatever regulations are set in place are workable, and that they do the work that the minister intended to have been done.

Once again, I just want to be on record here in the Legislature that I fully support the legislation before us. I look forward to the minister opening up the process of establishing the regulations and working with the industry, and hopefully it will allow members of this Legislature—members of the opposition parties, as well—to have some input in that process.

I want to take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the minister a broader issue that relates to the security industry. I offer the minister the benefit of some of the work that I have done in the past that relates not specifically to private investigators but to another aspect of the security industry that isn't being addressed in this legislation. I do believe it's very important that either this minister—or perhaps the government wants to deal with some of these other matters through another ministry, but it should be addressed, and that's the issue of the alarm and security industry. The minister will know that that is a growing industry in this province, and unfortunately there too is a lack of regulation, a lack of standards. There is nothing in place in Ontario that regulates, through licensing, from the standpoint of government; there is nothing in place in terms of a self-regulatory framework.

As a result, we have people opening up businesses every day in Ontario who represent to be putting in place, whether in homes or businesses, a security system, and then people are convinced that they can now rely on these alarm systems protecting either their persons or their homes when they are not there. In many cases, of course, even if they are at home they're designed to signal a warning that someone is entering the premises.

I conducted extensive consultations over a period of two years on this issue. We had meetings here at Queen's Park and we travelled the province. There were a number of recommendations as a result of my consultation with representatives from the industry that I was in the process of bringing forward. I want to deliver them to the minister for his consideration. He may well want to take an initiative in this regard.

The ministry had suggested at the time that the industry is facing a number of emerging issues. One was, as I indicated, the emergence of unethical business practices and the loss of trust by consumers in the industry,

and the resultant increased cost of false alarms, for example, to police services. A number of steps are being taken now, but I believe there is a serious need for this to be considered.

I say to the minister that of some concern for me is the implementation period for this legislation. I understand that we have to work with the industry. What you can't do is bring legislation down and have it implemented in 90 days, because there are serious implications. There are cost implications to some of the requirements that this legislation will put forward for the industry, so there's a need, obviously, for a transition period. I would have preferred to see some of this implementation accelerated for the benefit of community safety to ensure that the intent of this legislation is in place sooner than we'll see it under the current schedule. However, that is the minister's call, it's the government's call, and we will live with that.

In closing, I just want to say again that I commend the minister for bringing this forward. I do not want to miss the opportunity to express my appreciation to my colleague Garfield Dunlop for the work that he has done on this file. We look forward to this legislative framework being implemented in the interest of community safety.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I just want to agree with some of the comments made by the member from Oak Ridges, particularly with respect to the issue of when these regulations will be implemented. He raises an important point. I will speak to that as the next speaker and elaborate just a little on that.

I think the member from Oak Ridges probably would agree with me, with respect to issues of consultation, that we should have some hearings so that we can hear from people who otherwise have not been consulted. From my understanding, United Steelworkers have not been consulted at all in this regard. They represent about 26,000 guards. My sense is that the member would agree with me that they should be consulted in some form or other and that hearings would provide for that. I wondered if he had an opinion with respect to it.

1600

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I want to comment on the comments from the member from Oak Ridges. If you don't mind, I'd also like to state a little bit of background on the bill, in line with his comments.

I got a phone call one day from a lady whose son had died in an altercation at a shopping mall. She felt that somehow her son may have died without any recognition, so I went over to see her, to talk to her. Her name was Mrs. Shand; I think she's been mentioned here in the Legislature. She reviewed with me the circumstances, and I thought she made a good point. I talked to the local police just to see what was going on; appropriately, I think. At the appropriate moment, after the criminal investigations were complete, I did ask the coroner if this

was a case that would merit a coroner's inquest. The reason I point all this out is that there is an individual who took some action. She pursued it, and out of a tragedy, in my opinion, will come something quite good.

I just wanted an opportunity to get that on the record; I think the minister had already commented on her. Sometimes one individual can make a difference, and in Mrs. Shand's case, I think this bill is heavily as a result of her persistence in trying to make some good come out of her son's tragic death.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I want to compliment the member for Oak Ridges, who has given a fine speech this afternoon: very thoughtful and constructive. I've long admired the member for Oak Ridges. I sit right behind him; I watch his back every day. He does a great job on behalf of his constituents.

I know he would have wanted to mention in his speech, but perhaps didn't have time because of the time limitations, that he's been a long-standing supporter of double-hatter firefighters. He supported my private member's bill, Bill 30, way back when I first introduced it, approximately three years ago. I'm pleased that the minister of public safety and security is present in the House today, because I want to inform the House that the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs is having their conference next week. They're one of the groups that has long supported the concept of legislative protection for double-hatter firefighters.

For those of you in the House who perhaps don't know—I would hope all know—this is an issue that has been going on for many years now, and it's something that I've been raising for three years. In many cases in small communities in rural Ontario where we are served by volunteer fire departments, there are double-hatter firefighters who live in a small town but who may work in a city department nearby. On their free days and on their time off, they want to serve as volunteers in their home communities. The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has taken the position that this is not appropriate, and they have in some cases laid charges, believe it or not, against some of their members, threatening them with expulsion from the union if they don't quit as volunteers. This has meant that a lot of our small communities have lost hundreds of double-hatter firefighters.

I understand the minister is going to be there on Monday morning to speak to the chiefs' association. I'm looking forward to being there too, to hear what he says and to continue to encourage him to do the right thing: to bring forward some steps on the part of the government to ensure that these small communities don't lose these double-hatter firefighters that they need so desperately.

**The Acting Speaker:** In response, the Chair recognizes the member from Oak Ridges.

**Mr. Klees:** I want to thank the members who participated in this debate. To the member from Trinity-Spadina, I want to be on record as agreeing with him that it would be helpful to have some hearings on this bill, and I would hope the minister would support that as well.



There is never any risk of harming a piece of legislation when we ask for further input; it always will improve it. So I would certainly support that.

To the Chair of Management Board, I thank him for making reference to the Shand family, and I would recommend that when this bill becomes law, it should be called the Patrick Shand bill for that same reason, because it is true that out of a tragedy we are at least discussing a very positive piece of legislation that I believe will save many others from harm for years to come. To Mrs. Shand, we also express our appreciation for her courage in taking this issue forward.

I want to thank the member from Waterloo–Wellington for his kind remarks, and I want to reaffirm, in the presence of the minister, my support for the member from Waterloo–Wellington's initiative relating to double-hatters. I come from a riding where volunteer firefighters play a very important role. I believe that whole issue has, unfortunately all too often, been misunderstood and that this ministry has the opportunity to do the right thing not only for firefighters, volunteer firefighters, but for municipalities across the province. As I say, it's not often that we, as members of opposition, have an opportunity to endorse legislation that comes before the House. I do so wholeheartedly for this, and I look forward to the minister doing the same for double-hatters.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm happy to speak to Bill 159, on security guard regulation, and I want to say that there are some positive things about this bill and things we want to raise that are concerns, which hearings might obviously deal with, if not solve.

On the positive issue, the bill replaces the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act. Yes, it regulates private investigators, security guards and those who are in the business of selling the services of private investigators and security guards. There are mandatory requirements laid out for security guards and investigators, including that you've got to be over the age of 18, you've got to have a clean record and you've got to complete the prescribed training. All that is positive. No one can sell security services unless they are licensed themselves or are in the employ of a licensee. This is helpful, obviously. Additional requirements that one needs include insurance coverage, carrying a licence at all times and not lying about being a police officer. All of that is helpful. The bill will set by regulation criteria for uniforms and displaying of a guard's name, criteria for vehicles used by guards, criteria for mandatory training programs, criteria for testing programs, the term of validity of a licence and what qualifies as a clean record.

All these things will be dealt with by regulation, and the problem I have about the issue of regulation as it relates to the matters I have raised is that they will not be implemented until 2007. The member from Oak Ridges made reference to it, and I want to elaborate briefly and simply ask, why the delay? Why does it take until 2007 to set out the regulations around the issues I have pointed

out? Why can we not do it any faster than that? My hope is that the response to this debate and/or any Liberal who speaks later will point out the reasons as to why the regulations will not come into effect until 2007. There is no logical reason that I am aware of to explain the delay. There might be reasons, except I haven't heard them, and I hope that in this debate, assuming the Liberals will speak to it, we'll get some answers to the question of the delay.

**1610**

It happens often that some regulations are not implemented at all. It happens often that some regulations are implemented and some are delayed. I understand that. It happens to all governments—Conservative, Liberal, New Democrats—but to delay all of these regulations until 2007 makes no sense. That's why we need debate. That's why you need everyone in the House to participate. If you can't have five Liberals speaking, 10 Liberals speaking, you can at least have a couple of them speaking to address some questions that are raised in this Legislature. I'm optimistic we'll get some responses; if not, debate for at least 10, 15, 20 minutes. So the question of regulation and the delay is something I have spoken to.

I've got something to say, and I want to put it on the record. Steelworkers represent 20,000 workers—26,000 guards. To my knowledge, they have not been consulted at all. Representing 26,000 guards equals half of the 50,000 guards who serve in their capacity in this province. That's a whole lot of people that the Steelworkers represent. You would think that the ministry, the minister or this government would be interested in consulting them in some way. I'm not even suggesting that the consultation need have been in depth, just some kind of meetings, short or long, to get their input. It can be argued that the union representing 26,000 guards will get their opportunity when we have hearings. I understand that. But normally when bills are drafted, government, ministers, ministry staff tend to consult all of the various players who have something to say or to do with the bill. Given that this bill has not been revamped, amended, since 1966, it is an opportunity for the Liberal government to consult with Steelworkers.

I know that my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence supports that, because he's very close with labour. I know the Minister of Labour is close with labour as well, as are a couple of other Liberals. There aren't too many, although they all pretend to be closely allied with labour. But given their closeness to so many in the union movement, with union leaders, if not bosses—

**Mr. Mike Colle (Eglinton–Lawrence):** Carmen Principato.

**Mr. Marchese:** Carmen Principato just retired, evidently, yes.

**Mr. Colle:** Local 506.

**Mr. Marchese:** Local 506. He was there for 20 years or so, if not longer.

**Mr. Colle:** He's still there. There was a tribute to him.

**Mr. Marchese:** A tribute to him. He's still there. There was a tribute for Carmen Principato, Local 506,

representing the bricklayers. My colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence was just telling me this.

I didn't get a chance to go. Were you there?

**Mr. Colle:** Yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's very nice. I didn't see you mentioned in the *Corriere Canadese*.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** With Milano. I can't believe that a southern Italian would support Milano. I'm telling you, a lot of Milanese are separatists, equal to so many Québécois who want to separate from Canada. There's a league in the north, and so many Milanese support the separation of northern Italy, which includes, by the way, separating itself from Bologna south and Bologna's pretty north. I can't believe that my colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence would be supporting the Milanese team, which is on the extreme north on the left side, if you're looking at Italy this way. I've got to tell you, you should be supporting Reggina, which is much closer to you, or Messina Palermo, which is much closer to you than Milan, for God's sake.

I don't know. I'm a bit confused by it. I mean, as a fan, we want to prop up the south in some way or other to counteract the very discriminatory forces of the north against the south which has gone on for so long, which includes you, Mike.

**Mr. Colle:** We've been oppressed.

**Mr. Marchese:** You and I have been oppressed by so many northerners—and you too, Mr. Tascona. Given your heritage and where your parents might have come from, I suspect we share some commonalities in this respect. But that's not the subject of this bill we're speaking to. My colleague forced me to divert from the bill, unwittingly, because the Liberals want me not to prolong this debate, and I appreciate that. Is that true?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** No, I want to hear from you.

**Mr. Marchese:** Exactly. That's why you came into the House. That's why you've been here in the environs for quite some time.

To continue, the Steelworkers ought to be consulted because they're a big player, representing 26,000 guards. I know that Mr. Caplan, the minister of infrastructure, is very close to labour as well, and it may have been an oversight not to have consulted with them, but I know he will want to correct it and that the opportunity will be given to them when we have hearings. Given that we are amending this act and that it hasn't been changed since 1966, this is a golden opportunity to improve the bill in more ways than have been suggested by this government. So that's another issue I wanted to put on the record.

I also know the government may be delaying, or is still reviewing—with no promise, by the way, of any action—recommendation 11, which is, "Mandatory training should be delivered by qualified trainers certified by the ministry. There should be an established competency level defined by the ministry." The other recommendation, 12, says, "The ministry should develop a mode of

evaluation and a system of record-keeping for the delivery of mandatory training."

I appreciate that these two recommendations have some costs attached to them. That's one of the reasons why the Liberals may still be reviewing these two recommendations. I can't imagine this would be an incredible cost to be borne by the government. It would seem to me the government would want to move ahead as fast as it possibly can on items 11 and 12, dealing with mandatory training, for qualified trainers certified by the ministry. No need to delay. We must have that training. As far as I know, the government is still reviewing the matter. I raise that for the record. I have no doubt that they will be raised when the hearings begin and that the minister, of course, will be clear in his support for recommendations 11 and 12, once the amendments are proposed in those second reading hearings.

I have concerns about the fact that so many of these security guards earn only an average, as I understand it, of \$28,000, and \$28,000 can barely pay the rent; \$28,000 in this society, particularly in the big cities, particularly in Toronto, is not a whole lot of money. Most policemen and women earn an average of \$60,000, and that does not include overtime, but security guards are underpaid. If we review what Quebec is doing, where they use a sectoral bargaining approach to set standards, we know it has been proven effective that key provisions of collective agreements such as those relating to wages and hours are extended by law to non-union employers. This effectively takes wages out of a competition.

Speaker, I'm getting a sense here that we don't have a quorum in this place, and I really want a quorum so that members of this Legislature have an opportunity to hear, in the couple of minutes I've got, what I have to say.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum present?

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

Are you going to continue to debate?

**Mr. Marchese:** Of course I am.

**Mr. Colle:** Make it more interesting.

**1620**

**Mr. Marchese:** Michael Colle, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, is not happy with my performance today. He doesn't see me as passionate as he normally does, so he's obviously concerned and worried for me. Is that correct? I want to give him an opportunity to speak after me for at least two minutes in response to what I've said, and I want you, after the two minutes, to take at least 10 or 20 and chew the visceral stuff that you guys have and just put it right out in defence of this bill, or of anything else, including defending the Milanese squad. I can't believe that you're supporting Milan. Good team, but you and I have to support the south: Palermo, Messina, Reggina—even Lecce, for God's sake; good teams as well.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North):** You're annoying Hansard.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm annoying the doctor.



**Mr. Qaadri:** Hansard.

**Mr. Marchese:** The good doctor normally pays attention to me as well.

I want to say to some of the Liberals who might be paying attention that they are evidently creating a registrar who will monitor the act and can issue and/or deny licensing along various grounds, and some can be debatable. But the idea of creating a registrar is a good thing. I was debating for something similar when we were debating the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We argued on that bill that we needed to have a commissioner of sorts who would have the power, similar to the Environmental Commissioner, to monitor on a regular basis what this government was doing vis-à-vis disability issues.

I introduced a motion—to be fair, the Tories introduced a similar motion, but different—to the effect of having someone who would be able to monitor the effectiveness of that bill and on a regular basis report to this Legislature and tell us what the government was doing vis-à-vis that bill. It got defeated. They defeated my amendment, they defeated the Tory amendment and, lo and behold, on a bill being debated today we see the creation of a registrar who will monitor the act. So I raise concerns, for those who were debating this particular issue on my committee, because if you can justify a registrar to monitor this act, why would it be any less important to have a commissioner monitor the other act?

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** It's a different situation.

**Mr. Marchese:** My Liberal friend from the riding of Don Valley West says it's a different situation. I don't understand.

**Mr. Qaadri:** The times they are a-changing.

**Mr. Marchese:** No; that's a different song.

Why would you not hire a commissioner whose sole duty would be to monitor issues of discrimination as they relate to people with disabilities? You include the language that recognizes, finally—because you didn't have it before and you had to be pushed along—that people with disabilities have been discriminated against for a long, long time. Admitting that, you would think you would be interested in having a commissioner who would monitor how well you were doing or will do in the course of 15 or 20 years, because you refused another amendment of mine that would see dealing with issues of discrimination as they relate to people with disabilities diminish from 20 years to 15 years. You defeated that amendment. If you're going to have something dealt with within 15 years as opposed to three or four, surely you would need to have an accessibility commissioner who would be able to guide us, help the government along, from time to time criticize the government if it was not doing what it was supposed to be doing. Why would those conditions be any different from this one?

**Ms. Wynne:** We've got the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner.

**Mr. Marchese:** The member from Don Valley West argues that we've got the Ontario Human Rights Com-

missioner. We know that each and every case that goes before the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner takes anywhere from six months to three years, and some issues never get dealt with. We also know that many who are affected by some issue of racism or discrimination will not ever get to the human rights commission, because it takes time, stamina, guts and money to be able to take your issue to the commission. So how can you argue, "We've got that, so that's enough"? No. We needed a commissioner whose sole purpose would be to monitor how you as a government and any future government are dealing with issues of discrimination or dealing with issues of access as it relates to the bill you will pass in this session, and you refuse to accept that.

How do you find the money to create a registrar for this particular bill when you can't find the money to create a commissioner on disability issues? How do you square the contradiction of the two? The circumstances indeed are different, but the issue of monitoring is the same. Monitoring issues surrounding this particular bill are no different than monitoring issues surrounding disability matters. They're the same.

I've raised these concerns with you. We will surely hear from deputants who will come to the hearings, because I know this government is interested, as we are, in having many hearings far and wide in Ontario so people can be heard, including our labour friends—I know how close the Liberals are to them—and I look forward to those hearings.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Colle:** I want to add my commentary on the speech and the debate from the member for Trinity-Spadina.

The clear issue here is that we all agree that there are too many so-called security guards in this province who don't have the proper training, who aren't professional enough to enhance public safety and also to protect themselves, because they could put themselves in great danger. That's why this bill has received pretty wide support.

Not to undermine the points raised about consultation—and I think there will be continued consultation on this bill as it goes forward—I just want to also comment that supporting a soccer team doesn't necessarily mean you support the geographic or geopolitical underpinnings that relate to the location of that soccer team. Just because a person happens to support the Montreal Canadiens doesn't mean they support separatism. He implied that because I support a soccer team from Milan in northern Italy, I support the separatists of Lombardi and Bossi in the north. I just think that AC Milan is a great soccer team that just defeated one of the top Dutch clubs by a score of 2-0, and they are now waiting to take on the winner of Liverpool and Chelsea to see who will be determined the champion of champions.

Soccer aside, what this bill is about is good, fair protection for the citizens of Ontario, ensuring they have security personnel who are trained, professional, competent and identifiable by the public, because right now it's sometimes difficult to discern who is a police officer

and who is one of these security officers. That's why this legislation has been called for, and Minister Kwinter is taking decisive action. This is supported quite widely in the province.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** It's interesting. This debate has turned into a discussion of European soccer and who the best teams are.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Chudleigh:** Of course, the lack of NHL hockey this year has probably added to that debate. It will be very interesting to see, when and if the NHL strike ever ends, whether or not they will regain the position they had prior to that strike. Members in the House have been getting their sports fix from soccer this winter, apparently.

It's interesting as well that the number of security guards in this province has increased phenomenally in the last 15 or 20 years. Certainly in the last 10 years it has increased a lot. I suppose you could say that in the last five years, since 9/11, there has been an added emphasis on security, and security guards have increased phenomenally, necessarily, because the number of police officers we have on the streets of Ontario is not what it should be. In fact, this government has suggested there should be 1,000 more police officers. They've said they're going to bring that in, but they have not yet funded that program and the police officers from that program have not hit the streets, which increases the need for private security forces.

1630

The Shand inquiry was mentioned here. I should point out that the member for Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, brought in a wonderful, very succinct, complex and complete private member's bill, which addressed all 22 of the recommendations in the Shand inquiry. This bill does not do that. This bill falls short of the member for Simcoe North's bill, and that's too bad. It would be a wonderful thing if this bill could be strengthened, and perhaps it will be through the hearings and the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response? The member from Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm glad to see there's a great deal of excitement here today. That's why I always try to encourage and stimulate discussion; otherwise, it would be terribly quiet in this place. Have you noticed?

**Ms. Wynne:** Not as long as you're here, Rosario.

**Mr. Marchese:** No, exactly. That's why I'm trying to help.

I want to thank the friends and the foes as well, and to point out just a couple of things. The Shand inquest recommendations call for urgent changes. The minister has already admitted that regulations won't be in place until 2007, and they're still not sure whether they'll act on all the recommendations. But the inquest said we need urgent changes.

Secondly, the ministry is simply avoiding the important role the Shand inquest demands of them. They're still reviewing whether to set up the training system that the

inquest said was essential. Why they're still reviewing that I'm not quite sure.

Thirdly, the government talks about consultation, but they haven't even contacted worker organizations that represent thousands of security guards. The United Steelworkers represents 26,000 security officers across Canada, and no one, to my knowledge, has spoken to them. I know that employers are happy with the bill—God bless; that's OK—but some people are not happy, and they haven't been consulted; hopefully they will be. That's why we're calling on the government, obviously, to have plenty of hearings so that everybody can be heard. Given the opportunity to change a bill to which amendments have not been introduced since 1966, this is the time to make the bill the best that it can be.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Arnott:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak briefly with respect to Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999. This bill stands in the name of the minister of public safety and security and was introduced in this House on December 9, 2004. I recall the date—

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: Just to correct the record, the member, for whom I have a great deal of respect, keeps using a name that is no longer the name of the ministry. I'm the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I just wanted to correct the record.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sure the member will note that.

**Mr. Arnott:** I apologize to the minister if any offence was taken; none was intended. I still call you the Solicitor General, I'm afraid. I'm that far behind the times. But he's a fine fellow, and he has done a very extraordinary job as minister in many respects and on many files. I continue to work with him on a number of issues, as he knows.

I'm here today to speak to Bill 159. I recall vividly the day that bill was introduced. The minister was in the House to do a minister's statement, to talk about why the bill was necessary. I recall distinctly that he gave credit to the member from Simcoe North and acknowledged the role the member had in terms of bringing this issue forward. The member for Simcoe North brought forward his own legislation pertaining to this issue, Bill 88, which was called An Act to amend the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act. It was introduced June 1, 2004. As the House has heard many times during the course of this second reading debate, the bill brought forward, Bill 88, by the member for Simcoe North, was intended to respond to the recommendations of the Shand inquest.

As we know, Patrick Shand died of injuries received during an altercation with store employees and security guards outside a Scarborough grocery store on September 14, 1999. The coroner's inquest came up on April 23,



2004, with these 22 recommendations dealing with a broad range of issues.

Some of the issues that were covered by Bill 88, brought forward by the member for Simcoe North, included: mandatory multi-level training and standards for use of force, firearms and making arrests; different classes of and portability of licences; restrictions on the equipment that licensees are authorized to use or prohibited from using; prohibitions for licensees on uniforms and markings and colours of security vehicles that resemble those of police officers; prohibitions on licensees on use of badges or other insignia that resemble those of police officers; record-keeping of use of force that is required to be reported annually; a code of conduct which licensees are required to comply with when acting as a private investigator or security guard—it's my understanding the code of conduct was specifically referenced in the bill brought forward by the member for Simcoe North.

Members of the Corps of Commissioners and private investigators and security guards whose work is confined to acting for only one employer would no longer be exempt from legislation under Bill 88, and the penalty for a corporation that is convicted of an offence under the act would be increased to a fine of not less than \$50,000 and not more than \$100,000.

This was covered under Bill 88, brought forward by the member for Simcoe North. One of the concerns our party has articulated during the course of the second-reading debate on this issue is that when you compare Bill 159, brought forward by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and Bill 88, the private member's bill brought forward by the member for Simcoe North, the government bill leaves much of this to regulation later on. When you're in opposition, you ask questions about that particular issue whenever it's included in a government bill, and there is good reason for it.

In many cases, the people of the province are not in any way involved in that decision. Members of the Legislature, unless you are a member of the executive council, are unable to participate in those discussions. We can raise it in the Legislature from time to time, but unfortunately, when the decision-making power is left to the cabinet through order in council, in terms of establishment of regulations, we hear about it after the fact. It's done behind closed doors in the cabinet room in consultation with a select few public servants, but the members of the Legislature in most cases do not have any direct influence over those decisions.

From time to time, when bills are drafted this way, leaving much of the detail to regulation later on, members of the Legislature in opposition tend to ask questions about that, and rightly so. We are concerned about that, and we would like to see the government consider amendments to this government bill when the bill—I am pretty sure the government is planning to send this bill to committee. I think that has been the stated intent of the government during the course of this second-reading

debate. Assuming that is the case and assuming the bill does get referred to a standing committee, I would hope the government will be prepared to listen to the amendments that might be brought forward by the opposition parties.

I am quite confident in making the statement that our critic, the member for Simcoe North, will want to be involved in those hearings. I'm quite sure he will bring his expertise forward in the context of discussion on amendments. I would ask the government to listen to him and be prepared to consider the constructive proposals that I expect he will put forward.

I have known the member for Simcoe North since just before he was elected to the Legislature. He was one of our class of 1999. There weren't very many of our new members coming in the door in those days, but he was one of the few who was elected in 1999 as a newly elected Conservative MPP. I played a rather small role in terms of recruiting him, helping to recruit him to join our caucus, and to run as a Conservative candidate. Our party was quite impressed with the work that he had done as a local municipal politician in Simcoe county. He served as the warden of Simcoe county; he served as the deputy reeve of Severn township. He was a councillor for Coldwater.

1640

He and his wife, Jane, have two kids and three grandchildren, and the one concern he had when our party was attempting to recruit him to run as the Conservative candidate when the incumbent member had decided to retire was that he wondered whether or not he would have time for his family. He really felt strongly. If he was elected as a member of the Legislature, the one concern he had in his mind was, could he do the job justice as a member of the Legislature and still have time for his family? He is a real family man.

I was pleased to have dinner with him, and my role was to tell him what I did in terms of ensuring that I was able to balance my responsibilities as a member of the Legislature and also maintain my status as a father and a husband. I attempted to explain to him what I did. The main thing I have always tried to do is set aside time for my family and stick to it. If somebody tells you you've got to go somewhere else and you have set that aside as family time, whether it's your party leader telling you or your leader's office, or perhaps in some cases your constituents, you do have to try to carve out some time for your family and stick to it. From time to time, there may be opportunities that you miss as a result of that, but over the long run I have never regretted carving out time for my family in terms of my public responsibilities. I tried to emphasize that to then-Warden Dunlop, and I guess to some degree he was convinced that it was possible to do it. He does it, and he does a great job representing his constituents as well.

He is our critic for the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and that fits in very well with his constituency duties because, as the member for Simcoe North, in his riding he has the OPP headquarters in

Orillia, as we know. There is the Central North Correctional Centre, which is more popularly known as the superjail for that part of the province, and he represents the community that has that within its boundaries. He represents Simcoe North, and of course within Simcoe North was Project Turnaround, which was more popularly known as the boot camp. Again, I think it's interesting that he serves as our party's critic for this ministry, because there is so much within his community that touches upon the ministry. So it's quite appropriate that he does this job.

In terms of the government's bill, if we look at the explanatory note that is included within the bill, the government's bill "replaces the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act. It regulates private investigators, security guards and those who are in the business of selling the services of private investigators and security guards.

"Licensing requirements are imposed and procedures are put in place for revoking and suspending licences, subject to appeal provisions.

"Offences and regulatory requirements are provided for, as is a process for dealing with complaints from the public.

"The minister may make regulations setting out a code of conduct for private investigators and security guards."

Again, this is one of the key areas where we as an opposition party have concerns, in terms of how the code of conduct will be set out, and if the government has the power to make the regulations, we obviously want to know more about how it plans to proceed. Therefore, I would say again that we look forward to the hearings that may be forthcoming on this issue, and I would ask the government to reconfirm that they do plan to send this bill to committee so that members of the opposition will have an opportunity to continue to raise their issues, but certainly to ensure that the interested public groups have an opportunity as well to express their issues, their concerns, and to have their issues addressed.

This bill that the member for Simcoe North brought forward is, I think, in the finest tradition of private members' bills. I always felt, as a member of the Legislature, that Thursday mornings are a very important opportunity for members of the Legislature to bring forward ideas and issues that perhaps are not otherwise part of the debate within the Legislature. Right now, I've got four bills before the Legislature, and I would like to go into them very briefly.

One is to protect double-hatter firefighters, as I've already alluded to earlier.

I have a private member's bill before the House that would provide a provincial sales tax exemption for children's booster seats, because, as we know, the government has passed legislation recently that will compel families to have their kids in booster seats until these children are 80 pounds or eight years old. Right now, if you buy a child's car seat for an infant, there is a retail sales tax exemption on the purchase of the car seat for the smaller child. But, at the same time, people who buy a

booster seat are expected to pay retail sales tax. I would again ask the Minister of Finance to include a provision in his upcoming budget which would allow for a retail sales tax exemption on the booster seats that the government is now telling us we have to purchase for our children across the province.

Another issue that I brought forward as a private member's bill is to call upon the government to hold a public inquiry into the issue of gambling addictions, and until they do so, I've asked that they not open any new gaming facilities or expand any existing ones. I continue to be very concerned about this issue because we've seen a lot of information come forward lately about the severity and scope of gambling addictions in Ontario. I would submit that the government is not doing enough to assist people who have this addiction.

The final issue that I've raised, in terms of private members' bills, is the need for what I would call true real-time disclosure of financial donations. The government in its election platform in 2003 has committed to doing this. In recent days, in response to a number of very serious concerns that have been brought forward by the opposition about fundraisers that have taken place in certain communities, while at the same time the greenbelt boundaries were being developed, where developers were being asked to spend \$10,000 a ticket to come to a fundraiser, and we don't know who was at the fundraiser, the government finally, under pressure, brought forward legislation it had long since promised to have real-time disclosure. Unfortunately, the government's legislation doesn't give us real-time disclosure in a number of respects. My private member's bill on this issue, which I've introduced before the House and is at first reading, would compel the political parties and the riding associations to disclose in real time, the day they cash the cheques, who has given the money, and put it on a Web site. That, I believe, is what I would call real time. I believe it's something that is doable and it's something I would continue to advocate for in the context of the private members' bills process.

Having said all that—I think you've given me some latitude, Mr. Speaker—I was trying to get back to the whole importance of private members' bills: Bill 88, the member from Simcoe North bringing forward a private member's bill, and now we see the government appearing to respond to it in a meaningful way; not going far enough, perhaps, but at least responding to a sincere and serious initiative that was brought forward by a member of the opposition.

I look forward to further discussion on this bill and certainly to the discussion that may very well take place at committee.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any further debate? OK. Does the minister care to reply?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I move adjournment of debate.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** No, you don't.

**The Acting Speaker:** Do you care to reply, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** I will. I found it interesting. I learned a lot about soccer. I learned a lot about Garfield



Dunlop. I thought maybe he had died. I'm happy to hear that he hasn't. I'm also happy to hear that the two-hatter issue is still alive for the member.

In all seriousness, I want to thank all the members for their contributions. This is a bill that is important. It's the first time the bill has been amended in over 40 years. I just want to respond to a couple of issues that were made, one from the member from Trinity-Spadina: I want you to know that we had sent out 600 information pieces on this bill, and asked for inquiries, and the union in fact did respond in writing.

I should also comment that the reason we can't initiate this sooner is that there is going to be required mandated training. In order to do that, we have to set up the courses. We can't set up the courses until we have the regulations so that the community colleges that are going to be delivering this particular course will know what they have to teach. We also require time for some of these industries that are already in place to make the adjustments so that they can comply. It isn't practical to do it in any less time, and this is what the industry has told us. They have said that we can't do it unless we have this time.

The other aspect about it, of course, is that we are going to provide people who will be able to be recognized as professionals. They will have the adequate training, they will have security checks and they will pass an examination. As a result, it will elevate them to a professional status and, because of that, and without question, they will be able to command higher salaries. People will be happy to pay that higher salary for them because they're getting someone who they know has passed a security test, has passed an examination and has been trained. So it's a win-win for everybody.

That is why even—and I say “even”—organizations like the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, who are a long-standing, highly respected group, totally support it. They say, “We’re satisfied that our people will be able to meet the standard. Whatever standard you set, we’ll be able to meet it,” which means you don’t have to take the course; if you have the training already, you can just write the examination, get tested and you meet the requirements of the act.

With that, I want to thank all of the members who participated.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Kwinter has moved second reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

I have received a slip from the government whip:

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion by Mr. Kwinter for the second reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999, be deferred to May 2, 2005.”

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour of adjournment of the House? I say it's carried. This House stands adjourned until next Monday, May 2, at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1653.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman  
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller  
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)		
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)		<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Milloy, John (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Leeds-Grenville	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)		Fonseca, Peter (L)
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Peterson, Tim (L)
	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
		Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord		Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)
Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
		Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Parkdale–High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)</b> Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto–Centre–Rosedale	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Toronto–Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	<b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b> Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Samia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Scarborough East / Scarborough–Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	Windsor West / Windsor–Ouest	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L)</b> Speaker / Président	York Centre / York–Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Simcoe North / Simcoe–Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	York North / York–Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)	York South–Weston / York–Sud–Weston	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	York West / York–Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes



## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Jeudi 28 avril 2005**

### **AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

**Loi de 2005 sur le Fonds  
de développement économique  
de l'Est de l'Ontario,**  
projet de loi 187, *M. Sterling*  
Adoptée ..... 6679

**Loi de 2005 modifiant le Code  
de la route (passeurs scolaires),**  
projet de loi 142, *M. Brown*  
Adoptée ..... 6680

#### **PREMIÈRE LECTURE**

**Loi de 2005 sur le Registre  
des implants mammaires,**  
projet de loi 192, *M<sup>me</sup> Churley*  
Adoptée ..... 6683

**Loi de 2005 sur les prêts sur salaire,**  
projet de loi 193, *M. Kormos*  
Adoptée ..... 6683

#### **DEUXIÈME LECTURE**

**Loi de 2005 sur la déclaration  
obligatoire des blessures par balle,**  
projet de loi 110, *M. Kwinter*  
Adoptée ..... 6686

**Loi de 2005 sur les services privés  
de sécurité et d'enquête,**  
projet de loi 159, *M. Kwinter*  
Vote différé ..... 6709

#### **AUTRES TRAVAUX**

**Jour de deuil**  
*M. Bentley* ..... 6686  
*M<sup>me</sup> Witmer* ..... 6687  
*M. Kormos* ..... 6687

# CONTENTS

Thursday 28 April 2005

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### Eastern Ontario Economic

#### Development Fund Act, 2005,

Bill 187, *Mr. Sterling*

Mr. Sterling..... 6665, 6672

Mr. Leal ..... 6666

Ms. Scott ..... 6667

Mr. Kormos ..... 6667

Mr. Brownell ..... 6669

Mr. Yakabuski ..... 6670

Mr. Rinaldi ..... 6670

Mr. Runciman ..... 6671

Mr. Parsons ..... 6671

Agreed to ..... 6679

### Highway Traffic Amendment Act (School Crossing Guards), 2005,

Bill 142, *Mr. Brown*

Mr. Brown ..... 6672, 6679

Mr. Klees ..... 6674

Mr. Kormos ..... 6675

Mr. Leal ..... 6677

Mr. Hardeman ..... 6677

Mr. Brownell ..... 6678

Mrs. Cansfield ..... 6678

Agreed to ..... 6680

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund

Mr. Arnott ..... 6680

### Earth Day

Ms. Marsales ..... 6680

### Ukrainian Easter

Mr. Jackson ..... 6680

### Michelle and Brett Quance

Mr. Prue ..... 6681

### Community Living Oakville

Mr. Flynn ..... 6681

### Kingston art display

Mr. Runciman ..... 6681

### Eastern Ontario

Mr. Brownell ..... 6682

### Federal-provincial fiscal policies

Mr. Craitor ..... 6682

### Student leaders

Mr. McNeely ..... 6682

## FIRST READINGS

### Breast Implant Registry Act, 2005,

Bill 192, *Ms. Churley*

Agreed to ..... 6683

Ms. Churley ..... 6683

### Payday Loans Act, 2005, Bill 193,

*Mr. Kormos*

Agreed to ..... 6683

Mr. Kormos ..... 6683

## MOTIONS

### Private members' public business

Mr. Duncan ..... 6683

Agreed to ..... 6683

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### Electricity supply

Mr. Duncan ..... 6684

Mr. O'Toole ..... 6684

Ms. Churley ..... 6685

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Municipal finances

Mr. Tory ..... 6688

Mr. Gerretsen ..... 6688

### Greenbelt

Ms. Churley ..... 6690

Mr. Gerretsen ..... 6690

Mr. Caplan ..... 6691

### Child care

Ms. Horwath ..... 6691

Mr. Smitherman ..... 6691

### Provincial revenue

Mr. Flaherty ..... 6692

Mr. Phillips ..... 6692

### Government advertising

Mr. Kormos ..... 6692

Mr. Phillips ..... 6692

### Employment supports

Ms. Broten ..... 6693

Ms. Papatello ..... 6693

### Highway 417

Mr. Yakabuski ..... 6693

Mr. Takhar ..... 6694

### School closures

Mr. Marchese ..... 6694

Mr. Kennedy ..... 6694

### Growth planning

Mr. Wong ..... 6695

Mr. Caplan ..... 6695

### Fabry disease

Mrs. Witmer ..... 6695

Mr. Smitherman ..... 6695

### Domestic violence

Ms. Horwath ..... 6696

Ms. Papatello ..... 6696

### Identity theft

Mr. Parsons ..... 6696

Mr. Watson ..... 6696

### Eastern Ontario

Mr. Sterling ..... 6697

Mr. Gerretsen ..... 6697

## PETITIONS

### Property taxation

Mr. Ouellette ..... 6698

### Anti-smoking legislation

Mr. McNeely ..... 6698

Mr. Delaney ..... 6700

Mr. Sterling ..... 6700

### Education funding

Mr. Marchese ..... 6698

### Halton Recycling plant

Mrs. Munro ..... 6698

### Credit Valley Hospital

Mr. Delaney ..... 6699

### Justice system

Mr. Sterling ..... 6699

### Anaphylactic shock

Mr. Flynn ..... 6699

Mr. Delaney ..... 6700

### Health care funding

Mr. O'Toole ..... 6699

## SECOND READINGS

### Mandatory Gunshot Wounds

#### Reporting Act, 2005, Bill 110,

*Mr. Kwinter*

Agreed to ..... 6686

### Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005, Bill 159,

*Mr. Kwinter*

Mr. Klees ..... 6701, 6702

Mr. Marchese ..... 6702, 6703, 6706

Mr. Phillips ..... 6702

Mr. Arnott ..... 6702, 6706

Mr. Colle ..... 6705

Mr. Chudleigh ..... 6706

Mr. Kwinter ..... 6706, 6708

Vote deferred ..... 6709

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Wearing of ribbons

Mr. Bentley ..... 6680

### Day of mourning

Mr. Bentley ..... 6686

Mrs. Witmer ..... 6687

Mr. Kormos ..... 6687

### Business of the House

Mr. Caplan ..... 6700

*Continued overleaf*





No. 138

N° 138

ISSN 1180-2987

# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

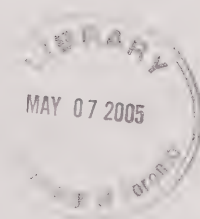
Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 2 May 2005

Lundi 2 mai 2005



Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 May 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** Last week I had the pleasure of driving across this great province. I stopped to meet with business people, councillors and industry representatives from across the north. One issue that was raised over and over by municipal councils right across the north was this government's Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund. I was astonished to hear the circumstances of two communities where COMRIF applications were rejected: Rainy River and Iroquois Falls.

Rainy River is under an environmental caution for their sewer system. In fact, the situation is so grave that the community can't add another house to their existing system. This government turned down their application.

Iroquois Falls also made a COMRIF application for improvements to their water and sewer system. The water system is so bad that when the Iroquois Falls fire service truck responded to a garage fire they found that the filters on the truck got plugged from corrosion from the water system. The garage burned down. Thankfully, no one was injured. Iroquois Falls's COMRIF application was also rejected.

These are just two of the communities that are disappointed by this program. In fact, only two communities in northwestern Ontario received funding. Many councillors I spoke with at the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association remarked that it looked as if COMRIF funding stopped at North Bay.

Northern communities are struggling with antiquated water and sewer systems, but this government doesn't seem to be listening to their cries for help. I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing why he has turned his back on the communities in northern Ontario.

#### MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce):** I'm very pleased to rise today to make everyone aware of the upcoming Organization of Small Urban Municipalities'

conference, commonly known as OSUM. This year it is being held in the beautiful town of Goderich, Ontario, in the new state-of-the-art building called the Maitland Recreation Centre. This year's theme is Strong Partnerships—Strong Communities, and I think this is an excellent theme. It represents not only the strong partnerships between small urban municipalities but their strong partnership with the provincial government.

OSUM is an important part of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. I am proud to be part of a government that is listening to the concerns of small urban municipalities. The new Ontario municipal partnership fund is an example of how we have consulted with AMO to come up with a formula that all municipalities can understand and that treats all municipalities with fairness and equality.

I wish to thank all of the organizers and volunteers for this 52nd annual OSUM conference and welcome all of the delegates. I know they will enjoy the town of Goderich, and I encourage all members to come to this event within the beautiful riding of Huron–Bruce.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** In recent months we've heard the Minister of Community and Social Services defend the Liberal government's plan to close the three remaining centres in Ontario that are home to over 1,000 adults with severe developmental disabilities. These are centres that the minister has declined to tour, and she has forged ahead with a cold and calculated decision driven solely by financial considerations.

The de-institutionalization and closure of the three facilities—Southwestern Regional, Huronia and Rideau Regional—had been brought to a virtual standstill by the previous Progressive Conservative government, and for good reason. That good reason was a determination that in the cases of the most severely disabled, the ones who are still in these excellent facilities, their needs are best met in their current environment.

In her defence of the closures, Minister Papatello talks about the provision of community services, but thousands of Ontarians are already waiting for those services to materialize. Before the Liberal government starts moving people out of their homes—facilities such as the Rideau Regional Centre—I implore them to provide an individual service plan that will satisfy the concerns of family members who believe their loved ones are now receiving

the best care available. I believe that family members are in the best position to assess the care model that meets the needs of their loved ones, and their beliefs should not be ignored.

#### KASHECHEWAN FIRST NATION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** That's a statement I totally agree with.

I want to bring to the attention of the Legislature the situation in Kashechewan. You will know that last Wednesday, both myself and Minister Kwinter went to Kashchewan to visit the flood that happened there this spring.

I want to paint a bit of a picture for you of what this community has to face. They are basically a community that is built inside a dike. About 10 years ago, the federal government built a dike around the community, about 20 feet high, made of dirt, to protect the community from possible floods from the Albany River. Well, Mr. Speaker, you will know there are not many things that stand up to Mother Nature and, sure as things are the way they are, that particular dike is starting to have some engineering problems. As the minister who was with me knows—and he was so gracious to come along—we recognize that we have a very serious situation where we have to make a decision either to replace the dike and rebuild it or to try to move the community away.

In the words of Monte Kwinter, the minister who was with me, it's a really difficult situation for that community. Imagine living in a dike, and what that has to do with how you feel as an individual living in a community like that, where when you walk out your door in the morning, all you see is a big berm of sand and dirt.

I want to thank Minister Kwinter for having come last Wednesday. I notice that he is sending me over some information about it as we speak. I look forward to working with him and pressuring our federal government, along with the province, to do what needs to be done to resolve the situation in Kashechewan.

#### ARBOUR DAY

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I rise today to recognize Arbour Day in the city of Mississauga. The observance of Arbour Day, which originated in 1872 in Nebraska, has spread to Canada and other countries around the world, and it's been adopted by schools and organizations as a tree-planting and environmental cleanup day.

The city of Mississauga celebrates Arbour Day annually with a tree-planting ceremony. This year's celebration was held Friday, April 29, at St. Edith Stein Elementary School near my home in Mississauga West. Students prepared for the special day by tracing and colouring their own handprints, which, once collected and assembled, formed a vibrant multicoloured mural of trees titled Helping Hands for Earth.

Friday's celebrations brought student representatives from each class together to join in singing It's a Wonder-

ful World, followed by a reading of The Giving Tree. My parish priest, Father Leo Huard, who in June will celebrate his 40th anniversary of ordination, then blessed the 20-foot sugar maple tree planted at the school.

I'd like to recognize and congratulate St. Edith Stein's principal, Cathy Saytar; vice-principal, Julie Rienzo; and ward 9 councillor Pat Saito and her representative, Teres Martin-Greer, as well as the entire St. Edith Stein student body for raising awareness about environmental protection in Mississauga and making 2005 Arbour Day celebrations a success.

1340

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** Being able to celebrate and take pride in our cultural diversities and heritage gives Ontario its strength. I stand here today to proudly announce that May is Asian Heritage Month.

Asian Canadians have greatly enriched our province over the years, and their contributions have helped to shape our community. We need only to look at the world of literature and the names of Joy Kogawa, Paul Yee, Michael Ondaatje, Anita Rau Badami, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Wayson Choy, and Rohinton Mistry. They remind us of how lucky we are to have such great writers, who tell their wonderful and compelling stories about their experiences and heritage.

Asian Ontarians have also excelled in many other areas: in the medical community, in the sciences and in government.

Our current Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, and the Honourable Vivienne Poy have made significant contributions, not only to our province but also to our country. In the medical community, Toronto's own Dr. Lap-Chee Tsui was a major contributor to the international project in mapping the human genome. In the financial community, Christopher Ondaatje has contributed significantly with his generous donation to the ROM. Mr. Ondaatje has stated that his contribution is a manifestation of not only his love of the ROM and his pride in his own South Asian heritage but, most importantly, his love and appreciation of Canada.

Our province is fortunate to have Asian immigrants call Ontario their home. Their contributions have helped shape our province, making Ontario the place to be. I ask all of you to join me, along with all Ontarians, in celebrating Asian Heritage Month, and to celebrate the diversity and strength of our province.

#### POLICE OFFICERS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Yesterday, May 1, I had the honour of representing our caucus and our leader, John Tory, at the sixth annual ceremony of remembrance at the Ontario Police Memorial here at Queen's Park. This year, the names of Constable Tyler L. Boutilier of the Grenville OPP, Constable Christopher Garrett of the Cobourg police, and Constable Michael



Siydock of the Port Credit OPP were added to the wall of honour.

The spouses of the officers, family members, and thousands of police officers from police services from across our province, and even officers from the United States of America were present. It was a beautiful service, with the Ontario Provincial Police choruses and various pipes and drums providing music.

The ceremony of remembrance is organized each year by the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation. I would like to thank the board of directors of the foundation: Richard Houston, president; Robert Welsh, vice-president; Frank Parkhouse; Charlie Green; Timothy Zayack; Joan Whalley, and David Brown for their commitment in seeing that this important event is carried on year after year.

But in particular, I'd like to thank the families of Tyler, Chris, and Michael for allowing their special heroes to serve the citizens of our great province. They will always be heroes in life, not death.

### LAPS FOR LUNGS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I rise today to talk about Laps for Lungs. Laps for Lungs is a new, school-based health promotion and charitable activity that is organized by the Lung Association. It is aimed at helping to educate students about asthma, as well as supporting schools with their fundraising strategy.

Laps for Lungs works in four ways: It provides asthma education and information for students from junior kindergarten to grade 8, their teachers and their parents; it promotes physical fitness among students; it gives back 30% of the net proceeds of each registered school as they raise it; and it provides vital funding for the Lung Association to ensure the continuation and development of its programs, research and other education initiatives.

I applaud the Lung Association, the schools and the students that participate in this important event, as it helps to bring awareness to a condition that affects more and more people every year. We must all do our part to ease the suffering that asthma causes.

I'm proud to say that we are doing our part. Last week we announced the closing of the Lakeview generating station. It was physically shut down this weekend. Closing Lakeview is the equivalent of removing 500,000 cars from the road—that's half a million vehicles. Not only will this help our environment by eliminating over two million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and help us in our efforts to achieve Canada's Kyoto targets, but by shutting down Lakeview and eliminating those emissions, we are also insuring that all Ontarians can breathe cleaner air.

### FIRE IN COBOURG

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** It is with extreme pleasure that I rise in front of the House today to

update my colleagues on the status of the dreadful fire that occurred one week ago today at Horizon Plastics in my riding of Northumberland.

I had the opportunity this weekend to meet with Brian Read, the president of Horizon Plastics. He was thankful for the support that was offered by the community and ministry officials. Mr. Read expressed his appreciation to the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Labour staff for their much-needed support and guidance during these difficult circumstances.

We've always known that Northumberland is a wonderful community to live in, but only when circumstances like these present themselves is it clearly evident how thoughtful and considerate these citizens really are. So many people pulled together to offer their unselfish and generous help to everyone and anyone in need of assistance.

Generously, a local community college offered temporary office space to Horizon Plastics, which permitted them to be back up and running on Tuesday, April 26, less than 24 hours after the day of the horrific fire. Mr. Read proudly let us know that he never missed a day of shipping.

Mr. Read has stated that this is one reason that he continues to operate his large-scale operation in Cobourg. We often take for granted how wonderful life is in small-town Ontario, until something as devastating as this happens. Mr. Read was astounded at the way people went out of their way to help his company get back and running. I'm happy to say, along with Mr. Read, that the company is 100% in operation today.

### VISITORS

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I had the pleasure of having lunch with Page Taylor Mercer today, and I wanted to introduce his family, because he has four generations here today; they're in the west members' gallery. His mother, Lauralynn Mercer, his grandmother, Barbara Mercer, and his great-grandmother, Mildred Caines, are here listening today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** That's not a point of order, but it's a very interesting point.

### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Ontario Heritage Act /  
Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario.

## MOTIONS

## COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the standing committee on general government and the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I move that, in addition to their regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on general government be authorized to meet the morning of Wednesday, May 4, 2005, for the purpose of considering Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, and the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, for the purpose of considering Bill 133, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act in respect of enforcement and other matters.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## VISITORS

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to take this time to draw the members' attention to a visitor from my hometown of Barry's Bay here today: Wilmer Matthews, a former principal at several high schools in the riding. It's good to have him here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The member knows that's not a point of order, but welcome.

1350

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** It is indeed my great pleasure to inform the House that last week the Canada-Ontario affordable housing agreement was officially signed and Ontario's new affordable housing program has been launched.

This is an historic occasion in this province. Ontario is back into affordable housing in a meaningful, significant way, after almost a decade of neglect by the previous government. I want all members of this House to know that that decade of discontent is over. Thousands of new units and housing allowances will become available for the neediest, most vulnerable members of our society.

This momentous agreement occurred through precedent-setting co-operation among all three levels of

government, each committing to finding a long-term affordable housing solution.

Over the past many months, ministry staff and I have worked closely with Canada's Minister of Housing, Joe Fontana, as well as other federal ministers responsible for housing—Andy Scott and Steve Mahoney—and their staff to develop the best new affordable housing program possible.

This new program also affirms the effectiveness of this government's approach to negotiating with its municipal partners and stakeholder groups. By choosing consultation over confrontation and co-operation over conflict, we were able to reach this historic agreement. Our government consulted with and listened to our municipal partners and stakeholder groups, who told us that the old program designed by the previous government simply did not work. They told us they needed more flexibility to meet local housing needs. They told us about the growing affordability problems in northern Ontario and in rural communities. They told us that they wanted to try innovative approaches.

Well, the McGuinty government listened. We agreed and, most importantly, we have acted. Ontario demanded and fought for flexibility and innovation. To their credit, our federal partners listened.

I also want to acknowledge the work of my colleague Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Gerretsen and his valued insights and contribution.

Our government truly believes that in an age of affluence, in one of the richest jurisdictions in the world, there is no justification for turning our backs on those who suffer misfortune. That is why, despite an extremely challenging fiscal situation, the McGuinty government is investing \$301 million in this affordable housing program, matching the \$301 million contributed by the federal government, for a grand total of \$602 million. We are keeping our election commitment to fully match federal dollars in this critical area. This brings the total amount invested in affordable housing in Ontario by the federal, provincial and municipal governments to \$734 million over the life of this program. It's an investment that will create more than 15,000 units of affordable housing and provide housing allowances for some 5,000 lower-income families.

Through the affordable housing program, there will be: more affordable rental units; more support for those needing housing assistance in northern Ontario; a major expansion of new supportive housing for victims of domestic violence and persons suffering from mental illness; and \$80 million directed toward 5,000 housing allowances in communities right across the province, providing immediate relief to low-income Ontarians.

The program establishes the Ontario mortgage and housing partnership, fulfilling another key commitment of our government. This will help housing providers access stable, long-term, low-cost financing to help build more units faster.

The program will also help make home ownership possible for those who thought it was beyond their reach.



We are introducing the home ownership market entry fund, or HOME, a new initiative that will offer a capital grant for the creation of new affordable housing. This grant will help to support the development of at least 4,500 units, which would then be purchased by Ontarians with low to moderate income at below the average market selling price for any given area. If appropriate legislation is passed, it will become permanent. If the unit is sold, the grant will be repaid to the fund, along with a share of the capital gains. This money would then be used to help more low-income families realize the Canadian dream of home ownership. Shelter is a basic human right, a basic human need. Because a house is more than a home, a home is a catalyst for stability in our lives, a necessary precondition for education and for employment. By investing in housing, we are investing in our people. By investing in our people, we are investing in stronger communities. In the days ahead, and in a continuing spirit of co-operation, our government will be working with our federal and municipal partners on the implementation and successful rollout of this important initiative.

We will be announcing further details as we move forward. Affordable housing is a key priority for our government. The new affordable housing program is a key component of our comprehensive housing strategy for this province. In this and in many other ways, we are taking action to protect and support Ontario's neediest, weakest and most vulnerable. We are helping to create the caring, compassionate civil society of which we can all be justly proud. I thank all members of this Legislature for supporting this important initiative.

## EDUCATION WEEK

### SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I rise today to recognize the many schools across Ontario that are celebrating Education Week. There is a great deal to celebrate about our publicly funded schools in Ontario, and today I encourage all my colleagues to see for themselves what is happening in our local schools. It has been 34 years, on average, since MPPs have been students in the schools, and suffice it to say that a lot has changed since then. I've once again issued, as I did for the last five years as critic, and now as minister, a non-partisan challenge to all members of this House by encouraging them to reconnect with Ontario's students, teachers, education workers and principals by spending a full day back in the classroom this month.

Une fois de plus, comme je l'ai fait au cours des cinq dernières années, je lance un défi non partisan à tous les membres de cette Assemblée et je les encourage à rétablir des liens avec les élèves, le personnel enseignant, les travailleurs d'éducation et la direction des écoles de l'Ontario, en passant une journée complète en salle de classe ce mois-ci.

As a government, we have worked relentlessly to help all students get the education they deserve. Our education

partnership approach has paved the way for an environment of peace and stability, a necessity if we are to achieve our shared goals for students. If members decide to visit an elementary school this year, they may well see the results of our \$90-million investment to help bring the average class size down, ultimately capping it at 20 in JK to grade three. They might meet one of the 1,100 new primary teachers who were hired through that funding. Students in almost 1,300 schools have benefited; that's one in three schools that are seeing and feeling that improvement.

This morning I met with Mrs. Marie Braz, a grade 3 teacher, and her students at Indian Road Crescent Junior Public School. The school has hired a new teacher with funding that we provided to reduce class sizes. With our investment, the school estimates that there would have been 32 students in Mrs. Braz's class otherwise; there are now 23. That is a result we all can be proud of and one that has been repeated 1,300 times in school after school right across Ontario.

We have also focused on providing our high school students with more opportunities to succeed. We recognize the need for a new, imaginative program to lower the dropout rates in Ontario high schools. That's why last June we announced an additional \$100-million initiative to fix curriculum issues, improve technological education and provide other alternatives for struggling students.

Today, if you visit the schools, you have a good chance of seeing the results of 105 innovative projects for 3,000 secondary students who are most at risk as part of an \$18-million investment we made in January designed to give them new opportunities to succeed in school. For example, in the Honourable Jim Watson's riding, Ottawa West-Nepean, 11 students in the Ridgemont High School's renovation project took on the task of completely renovating a house. A grade 12 student enrolled in the program said it was a struggle for him to get up in the morning and go to school, but now he's excited about the work ahead. I met him when I travelled to Ottawa to visit the project myself, and he said to me and to Minister Watson, "When I see the completed house that I worked on, I will feel more satisfaction than I ever have with a book of notes." That's a change in attitude that we can be proud of, more of which will be usual in the schools across the province.

#### 1400

Les écoles de toute la province sont maintenant plus accessibles aux groupes communautaires. En juillet dernier nous avons accordé 20 \$ millions, avec le ministre de « Tourism and Recreation », aux conseils scolaires pour ouvrir les portes de nos écoles et créer ainsi des centres communautaires où toute la population de l'Ontario peut apprendre et s'épanouir.

As a result, non-profit community groups that run activities for children and youth no longer have to pay rental fees, for example, to the Limestone District School Board. Minister Dombrowsky, the member representing Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington; Minister Gerretsen, the member for Kingston and the Islands; and

Mr. Sterling, the member for Lanark—Carleton, may well see those results when they visit schools in their communities. Those schools will be available to community groups for 7,000 more hours a year. That's 3,500 more basketball games or 5,000 Brownie meetings, thanks in good part to the hard work of my colleague the Minister of Tourism and Recreation—a significant result for local students, parents and members of the community.

The McGuinty government believes that all students, including those in small rural communities, should have an equal opportunity for quality education. By investing \$31 million to help keep good schools open, 1,149 rural schools will benefit. The St. Clair Catholic District School Board has hired full-time secretaries at 19 of their schools and recommends that 15 elementary schools be assigned a full-time principal instead of part-time.

I encourage my colleagues—the member for Chatham—Kent—Essex, Pat Hoy; the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, Maria Van Bommel; and the member for Sarnia—Lambton, Caroline Di Cocco—to spend time with some of those secretaries when they spend a day in school this spring. If they do, they'll see the difference a full-time secretary makes to a school and its students, and the support that that provides to the principal and teachers throughout the school.

These are just some of the results of our education investment. Clearly, we acknowledge that there is much more that needs to be done. Our government firmly believes that excellence in education is critical to our students' and to our province's future. We will continue to invest wisely in Ontario's publicly funded system.

Il ne s'agit que de quelques-uns des exemples du fruit de notre investissement en éducation. Il reste toutefois du pain sur la planche.

Notre gouvernement est fermement convaincu que l'excellence dans le domaine de l'éducation publique est vitale pour l'avenir des élèves et de la province, et nous continuerons à investir de façon judicieuse dans le système d'éducation financé par les deniers publics de l'Ontario.

By going back to the classroom, we, the legislators of this province, can all reconnect with teachers and students and see the McGuinty government's investment at work, producing results. Constituency week is just around the corner, so the timing for this commitment in Education Week couldn't be better: smaller class sizes, resources and respect for teachers, more opportunities for high school students, and peace and stability in our schools.

Réduction de l'effectif des classes; ressources pour le personnel enseignant et respect envers lui; augmentation du nombre des possibilités offertes aux élèves des écoles secondaires; paix et stabilité dans nos écoles.

To my colleagues I say that Ontario schools are better this year. Please go back to your local school and see for yourself.

Thank you. Je vous remercie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Responses?

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I am pleased to rise on behalf of the official opposition to acknowledge and celebrate Education Week in Ontario. The public boards are celebrating this week with the theme Read to Succeed, and the 2005 Catholic Education Week theme is Being the Body of Christ.

For the Catholic board, this annual promotion celebrates the distinctive contribution that Catholic schools make to students, the community and society. The foundational belief of Catholic education is that spiritual and moral formation are critical to the development of the whole person and to the realization of the fullness of life.

As we set aside this week to mark the importance of education and to honour those who work with our children in the education system, we focus on building a brighter, successful future for our children. The two themes chosen for 2005 speak eloquently to that goal.

Read to Succeed has been a central theme in education across Canada for many years. Almost daily it seems we see celebrities, athletes, corporations and non-profit organizations espousing the necessity of reading skills as a key to success.

The Minister of Education's press release today emphasizes that collective agreements and infrastructure loans are what we should be celebrating. While no one disputes the importance of renewing our schools and classrooms, it is equally important to ensure that those who teach our children have the skills and resources to provide the best possible education. Doretta Wilson, of the Society for Quality Education, made the point just recently that children can't learn if they can't read. We need to implement proven, effective phonics reading programs in order to successfully teach Ontario's children. There are hundreds of thousands of parents who share those sentiments. We need to remember that some of the basics that we were taught remain valid and valued in today's Ontario.

As we mark Education Week, I want to champion the dedicated teachers in our children's classrooms, the parents who get involved with their child's school council, those in rural Ontario who are struggling to keep their schools open, the students who do peer tutoring and mentoring, those students who participate in student government and the principals and all of the support and administrative staff who strive daily to provide a nurturing, caring environment before, during and after school for all of our students. We must recognize that the education system is made up of dedicated individuals who, by their actions, have a profound impact on our children each and every day. The success of our children is undeniably tied to those who work in our schools and classrooms. As we celebrate this specific week, let's work with our partners in the education system to make every week a celebration of student success.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln):** I'm pleased to respond to my friend and colleague the Minister for Public



Infrastructure Renewal's announcement. While we would like to see the Liberals actually keep a campaign promise, I'm going to remain a bit skeptical here until we actually see some spades in the soil. I can't help but say that it looks a lot like pre-election goodies for their federal Liberal cousins. We hear in here day after day from the Liberals what a lousy job the federal Liberals are doing and how they're not standing up for Ontario. But now that we're getting close to an election and they've got cameras there, they couldn't get up-close and personal enough for those TV cameras.

I think when members look at the details—

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Jack Layton—

**Mr. Hudak:** There may be credit due to Jack Layton as well for pushing those federal Liberals along. These guys certainly aren't doing a good enough job pushing the federal Liberals, because now they're buddies again, whereas last week they were sworn enemies.

When you look at some of the details here, it looks a lot like a reannouncement of the deals that were signed by the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves governments in 2002 and 2003, except they're giving themselves until 2010 to come through with the funds. It's the same pool extended a number of years.

We certainly think that there are a number of things in here that we want to encourage, including, as the minister said, encouraging home ownership. We believe, as Conservatives, in that principle of encouraging people to own their own homes. We think that's a good initiative and would like to see more of that in that housing deal. Lowering taxes on individuals will go a long way to helping them invest in their own family homes.

It's important to encourage the building of rental units. A punishing tax regime exists. More regulations from the McGuinty government and strained signals on the Tenant Protection Act are discouraging the building of rental supply to help address this issue from the private sector.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I have to remind myself of the old phrase "third time lucky." This is the third time I've heard this announcement, and I hope that this time the people of Ontario are lucky.

We acknowledge in the NDP that there is an absolutely huge need for affordable housing. There are 65,000 families in this city alone who are on a waiting list of anywhere from three years to 14 years, depending on the housing they need. There are 150,000 families in Ontario in exactly the same predicament.

There has been virtually no affordable housing built in this province for 10 long and very sad years. After the NDP there just was none. In eight years of the Conservatives and, I have to tell you, nearly two years of this Liberal government, nothing has been built. In the year 2003-04, your own deputy minister has said you built 21 homes in all of Ontario. The year 2004-05, when we get those figures, will be pretty much the same.

I live in hope, and so do all of those families who need affordable housing. I have to say that the log-jam was broken and the announcement was made only after a deal

was struck in Ottawa; not the deal between the minister and his federal counterpart, but the deal between Jack Layton and the federal Liberals. All of a sudden, there's money for housing; all of a sudden, there's money for social programs and post-secondary education. We could only be so lucky for all of our political lives to have such a situation.

**1410**

I have to tell you that I remain somewhat sceptical. We have heard it all before. So have the champions of housing in this province. Mr. Shapcott, Cathy Crowe and Charles Catto have heard it all before and listened to this. But there were smiles on their faces last week, and I suppose we all must smile too. The real test will come not with the announcement today but at some time in the very near future, if we actually see those 150,000 families in their brand new homes.

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I'm happy to stand as a former teacher to celebrate and honour the work of all the men and women teachers that we have in the system. I was listening to the minister, desperately looking for something to celebrate with him as he made this announcement, desperately wanting to praise him and his government. I just don't know how to do it.

So I look at all the things the government has done. I look at the special ed problem we have in our system. Last year, he announced \$100 million in July and then clawed back \$100 million in August. He gives it in one month, takes it away the next month, and he leaves 43,000 students who are waiting for special ed—the very ones he defended before he was in government—waiting again for another year without one cent of special education dollars that would help those kids to learn to read.

So I wonder, where is this government and this minister when it comes to the special ed promises? Where is this government when we talk about closure of small schools? He is the minister, and this is the government that says, "We're not going to allow small schools to close; in fact, we've got a moratorium on small school closures." And yet, as we speak, in a matter of weeks the Fourway School and six other northern Ontario schools are scheduled to close, in spite of the moratorium imposed by this government and in spite of all that big heart Gerard Kennedy and the Premier have about saving small schools.

We talk about transportation. These people were going to bring in an equitable transportation system—which now leaves 30 boards with less money than ever before. They were going to correct the Conservative transportation system, but now, come this September, 30 school boards will get so much less money that many children will have to travel for more miles than ever before. This is under a Liberal government that has a heart for education. This heart couldn't get any bigger, and yet we suffer these problems.

We've got capital school announcements where he's going to spend \$3 billion or \$4 billion in capital improvements, and I'm telling you, there ain't no money. There isn't any money that's going to flow.

We talk about this new deal with elementary teachers and secondary teachers where we're going to see 1,300 at the elementary level and 1,300 at the secondary level—all inventions. They're manufacturing an illusion, and it's my job to demystify those mysteries. As I do that, I hope that the teachers, in spite of the broken Liberal promises, will continue to do what they always have done, and that is to teach our young men and women to be the best that they can be.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### PRIVATE SECURITY AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LES SERVICES PRIVÉS DE SÉCURITÉ ET D'ENQUÊTE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 159, An Act to revise the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act and to make a consequential amendment to the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 159, Loi révisant la Loi sur les enquêteurs privés et les gardiens et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi de 1999 sur le Tribunal d'appel en matière de permis.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1414 to 1419.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Horwath, Andrea	Peters, Steve
Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Peterson, Tim
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Ramali, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldeep	Rinaldi, Lou
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Marchese, Rosario	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Churley, Marilyn	McMeekin, Ted	Sterling, Norman W.
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Delaney, Bob	Millroy, John	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	Munro, Julia	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	O'Toole, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dunlop, Garfield	Oraziotti, David	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Zimmer, David
Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie	
Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 76; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** Mr. Speaker, can I refer it to the standing committee on justice policy?

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

## MEMBERS' ANNIVERSARIES

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on the 20th anniversary of the election of you, Mr. Speaker, Minister Ramsey, Minister Kwinter, Minister Cordiano and Mr. Jackson as MPPs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Since I've had the privilege of serving with all of these individuals, I would like to pay tribute to them all, collectively and individually.

First of all, I think what you have to consider is that if a person is elected consistently over the years, both when the tide is coming in and when the tide is going out, that speaks well of the individual within the constituency itself, because that does happen in politics. Each one of these individuals was elected at a very significant time in Ontario history. While this wasn't the end of the 42-year reign—a very impressive reign of 42 years—by the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, it did nevertheless represent a significant change, in that a minority government was elected and ultimately a change of government took place.

Each of these individuals, you will notice, when the tide has come in—and it has, because the Liberal Party won an overwhelming victory in 1987, the NDP in 1990, the Conservative Party came in very strongly in 1995, and the Liberal Party came back in 2003—with these sweeps, as they are referred to, each of these individuals survived. What is most difficult, by the way, is not only surviving when another party is being elected rather substantially, but surviving when your own government is heading out the door. That is the ultimate difficulty and challenge when that's happening, and each one of these individuals has been able to do that.

Each came from a different background, and it's interesting to see. Joe Cordiano, for instance, came from a business background, was an entrepreneur in the private sector, and now he has an opportunity, with an economic portfolio, to fulfill and bring to that portfolio the expertise and intuition he developed as an entrepreneur. He has also been in opposition, the deputy leader of the official opposition, and was at one time the parliamentary assistant to former Premier David Peterson.

Again, each of the individuals being honoured today has played a significant role both in government and in opposition, and my contention is, though I sit on the gov-



ernment side today, that the opposition in our democratic system plays an exceedingly important role. Each of these individuals was a key person, or perhaps continues to be a key person, on one side of the House or another, playing that particular role on behalf of their constituents and all the people of Ontario.

You, Mr. Speaker, were elected in the riding of Scarborough North, I remember it was, now Scarborough—Rouge River. I know of your background in the community college system and your dedication to literacy, for instance. You, I remember, were the Minister of Housing at one time under the Peterson government and the Minister of Skills Development. I know as well that you were the president of World Literacy of Canada from 1981 to 1984, on the board of directors of the World Hunger Project, and you recently received an award from the government of Jamaica, the Order of Distinction, with the rank of commander. Again, you come from an educational background and you've been able to utilize that as a member of the Legislature.

Cam Jackson comes from a business background as well, and an education background, having served on the Halton Board of Education. He was involved in a number of activities within his own community—and still, as a member of the Legislature, is involved in those activities—and has held significant portfolios as an opposition critic. Of course, he has been Minister of Long-Term Care with responsibility for seniors, Minister of Tourism, Minister of Citizenship and Minister of Tourism and Recreation—again, a long and distinguished career, not only in this House but preceding this House.

Monte Kwinter—a rather impressive educational background, Monte. I didn't know you had gone to so many different schools and had such a background. He was elected from Wilson Heights, a very challenging riding. He served as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Minister of Financial Institutions, Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, and has been very much involved in his own community, particularly in Toronto.

David Ramsay, elected in Timiskaming in 1985, was the Minister of Northern Development and Mines; he was Minister of Correctional Services, Minister of Agriculture and Food, and is now Minister of Natural Resources.

Each of these individuals, if you look at where they came from, never forgot where they came from, and the people of their communities appreciate the job that they've done. I join other members of the Legislature in congratulating the 20-year club, the five members honoured today.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark—Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, as you are one of the celebrants today, I'd ask you, are you going to recognize me first for petitions today? I just want to get that straight before I start my remarks.

Before the proceedings started today, Mr. Bradley came over and talked to me about what we were going to say. We both agreed that we'd still call the group of five that are being celebrated today as johnny-come-latelies,

because we only consider people over 25 to be seniors in this place. Isn't that right, Mr. Bradley? Mr. Bradley and I will be celebrating our 28th anniversaries very shortly.

I've had a long and pleasant association with each and every one of the five celebrants today. Of course, only Mr. Jackson sits in my caucus. Mr. Bradley talked about the tides coming in and out, and only Cam and I and 14 others in 1987 survived a tide that was really going out at that time. So we do all understand the ebbs and flows of politics as we go along.

I think that all the five members we are talking about today have worked well with all members of the Legislature. I can remember working with David Ramsay when he was the Minister of Agriculture and I chaired the committee on agencies and boards and commissions of the Legislature. At that time, even though he was sitting in opposition as the Minister of Agriculture, David and I came together with the committee, and out of that particular process emanated what was to be the predecessor of committee bills for this Legislature. It was because of David's willingness to work with a member of the opposition to try to get this place to work a little differently. That particular offer resulted in a twiggling of the rules some years later, when I became the House leader and was able to do it, so that we then had a new process where committees can create legislation in the committee and add to the legislative process.

**1430**

I know Monte Kwinter and his wife, Wilma, very, very well. Monte served at one time as the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. As you know, Mr. Speaker, at that given time that minister was responsible for the LCBO. I always thought that that was one of the most wasteful appointments that David Peterson ever made, because Monte does not imbibe at all. I only want to ensure Monte and anybody else who ever wondered that his successors made up for his lack of appreciation of the finer things in life.

I understand that Minister Joe Cordiano is in Japan today representing Ontario's interests. I have always been interested in working with him, because Joe in some ways represents a more closely fitted political philosophy of myself than perhaps some of his colleagues. I consider that he is serving in the right portfolio. Joe, as you know, ran as a very strong candidate for the Liberal Party leadership, and I think that his support and his work led to the considerable support that he received in that as well.

Mr. Speaker, of course you have been an eminent member of the Legislature, and now have been honoured by being elected from among your peers as our leader. I think that speaks more than anything else of the recognition you have gained, over your 20 years, as someone who can be trusted and has integrity in our Legislature.

Lastly, I would like to talk about my good friend Cam. When Cam was elected here very, very early, I can remember Cam standing over to your right, Mr. Speaker, with his daughter Amy, and it was probably the only time a young child like that appeared on the floor of the

House. I don't think the Speaker saw that Cam was with Amy at that time, but the interesting part was that it was the time that Mr. Nixon was delivering his first budget. Amy is now 19 years old, so it was in that first year. The picture from the Speaker's gallery came down and, lo and behold, on the front page of the paper the next day it wasn't Robert Nixon with his budget—he was relegated to page 2—but it was Cam and Amy who had the front page.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** Cam always knows how to do it.

**Mr. Sterling:** Cam always knows how to do it, as Mr. Bradley says. I congratulate Cam. He has been a tremendous advocate in his own community of Burlington. He always has something going on: a blood clinic, or a seniors' seminar, whom he has represented here many times, either in opposition or in cabinet.

I want to say to all of the members, congratulations. The average stay around here is six years; 20 years is a long time away from the average.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you on 20 years in this House, along with your colleagues Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kwinter, Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Cordiano.

I've got to say, normally we do this as you are leaving, and I'm wondering if there's some other announcement a little later on this afternoon, or are we just wishing you well while you are here? I have to wonder.

I want to say to all of you, being elected for 20 years is not easy. We know that the job as representatives, provincially or federally, can be fairly difficult at times. All of these individuals have sat both in government and in opposition, so you all understand the challenges of opposition along with the challenges of government, and the good and the bad that go with both sides. To be able to survive for 20 years is quite something. Very few people are going to get the opportunity to choose their exit out of this Legislature. Obviously—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** I'll tell you, it is very true. Most people don't get to choose; it's the people who choose when you're out of here.

I have to say that 20 years of service in this Legislature, being elected at least five times, says something about the ability to be prepared in elections, doing your jobs and making sure that the people back home say, "Yes, I give you the confidence for yet another election."

I also want to say, on a bit of a personal note to some of you—and I don't want to go through all of it, because I know my colleagues before have gone through it—I had an opportunity just this week to fly up to Kashechewan with Minister Kwinter. We had an opportunity on the flight up—I paid for the charter, by the way, everybody should know—

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** What?

**Mr. Bisson:** Yes, I'm allowed, as a member, to travel across Ontario.

Anyway, we had an opportunity to not only discuss what happened in Kashechewan but to talk about why he got into politics. It was quite interesting in that particular

discussion, given the work that he had done, mostly at the federal level—that he had decided in the end to run provincially, at the behest of David Peterson, the then Leader of the Opposition. I'm glad to know, from this discussion that we had the other day, that after 20 years he said, "You know, I made the right choice." Because, at the end of the day, provincial politics is actually rather interesting, and you're much more engaged in the local issues than you would be on the federal side.

To my good friend Mr. Ramsay: Well, you've had a chance to be on both sides and then some. I'm sorry, David. I had to take a shot. But I want to say with all respect, at times we've been on the same side of some issues, fighting on behalf of northerners, and other times we've been on the opposite side. The one thing I will say is at least we've always kept our sense of humour about us. Specifically, we've never taken any of this personally. I think that says something about you as a member. One of the reasons you've been able to survive 20 years is remembering, at the end of the day, that politics is about the art of the possible. At times you need to take the positions that sometimes are not popular and respect the other side, so I give you credit for that.

To my good friend Mr. Curling, the Speaker: I've had an opportunity to serve with you on a number of occasions at the BOIE, and on other occasions I've sat on committees with you—always a good approach when it comes to representing your constituents. It's interesting that the Speaker is probably more independent than most Speakers when it comes to isolating himself from party politics at times. That's one of the things that I want to give you credit for. You've always understood it's the people back home, and sometimes we don't want to get too involved on the political side of what happens here in the Legislature. I think that says something about you being elected for those 20 years—always remembering at the end of the day that you're here to do a job, and that job is to represent the people back home.

To my good friend Mr. Jackson: I've got to say Cam is one of the more interesting people in the Legislature, because he's one of the more complex people I've had to deal with, in the sense that—

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** You could describe it like that.

**Mr. Bisson:** Well, it's interesting. This is coming from a New Democrat. He's much more of a social democrat than he makes out to be.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bisson:** No, I've got to say this in all honesty. Listen, everybody, I'm giving him a compliment. He's to the left of the party, I want to tell you.

I had an opportunity on many occasions, when he was minister of the various ministries that he was responsible for, to deal with him. I specifically remember the very open-door policy that Cam Jackson had, not only when it came to me but when it came to First Nations. He is one of the few ministers in the years that I have been here who really had a soft spot in trying to do something right



on behalf of First Nations. I'll always remember a number of meetings that we've had together. For example, Chief Leo Friday in Kashechewan, who has a lot of difficulties in that community—open-door policy. You made the impossible happen, in funding the arena project up in Kashechewan. He overturned his ministry to make it happen. I give you full credit for that, and that was a job well done.

To my good friend Joe—and I'm running out of time—I do want to say it has been really interesting, because over the years we've sat on committee together on one of the issues that was very important to all of us, and that is economic development as it relates to our communities. I wish you well in your time and your portfolio as Minister of Economic Development and Trade. I know that if I was with you in Japan, I would be telling you many good stories about what we can be doing with Japan in order to enhance trade here in Ontario.

**The Speaker** Let me, on behalf of the five, thank the two deans and the possible dean in the future for the wonderful and kind words that they have said about my colleagues. We intend to stay here another 20 years.

**Mr. Bisson:** On a point of order, Speaker: I just wonder, does that mean you now qualify for your pensions after 20 years?

**The Speaker:** I'll tell you later.

1440

**Mr. Sterling:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I did mean to mention, and I know all members of the Legislature want me to thank on their behalf, Cam Jackson's wife Elaine, and his children Amy, Lauren and Michelle; David Ramsay's wife, Kathleen, his daughters Erin and Danielle, and his stepson Michael and his 2-month-old grandson Issah; Joe Cordiano's wife, Rose, and daughters Lara and Natalie; Monte's wife, Wilma, and his children Richard, Robert, Lisa and Cathy; and your children, Mr. Speaker, Deone, Nicole and Tyrone. All members of the Legislature recognize the sacrifice the families make, and we should thank them as well on this 20th anniversary.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes on Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** May is Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. It gives us an opportunity to reflect on the devastating impact that sexual violence has on victims, on our communities and on our society. It also reminds us of the need for collective action on this issue.

I'd like to share some statistics with my legislative colleagues today. Children and young people under the age of 18 accounted for 61% of sexual assault cases

reported to police in 2003. Those at the highest risk of sexual assault are girls aged 11 to 17. In cases reported to police, 80% of sexual assault victims knew their accuser. More than one third of Canadian women reported that they have experienced sexual violence. Fewer than 10% of sexual assaults are even reported to the police.

These statistics show the alarming reality that sexual assault continues to be a pervasive social problem in our society, and one for which we must collectively find an answer. The McGuinty government is committed to doing just that, and in fact we have already started.

Earlier this year we announced the first funding increase to sexual assault centres in 13 years. Our \$1.9-million investment will provide an 8% increase in funding—annualized operating funding—to 36 sexual assault centres and help sexual assault victims with better community supports. The funding will also help French-language centres attain equal funding with other centres and to address gaps in service to French-language communities. Last December, we released our domestic violence action plan, which includes, importantly, \$5.9 million to train professionals and front-line workers, including those who work in shelters and in our justice system. These dedicated women and men on the front lines do talk about sexual violence. The new funding will help equip them with more training and resources to provide even better support to those who have been abused.

Our plan promotes and champions healthy, equal relationships, because part of the solution is early intervention. We're doing this by encouraging a shift in attitudes about relationships, particularly in younger generations. This is especially important given that girls and young women are at the highest risk of sexual assault.

We are investing in a four-year public education and prevention campaign aimed at mobilizing communities across Ontario to promote healthy, equal relationships among youth; to encourage youth to adopt positive social skills and values; to help equip parents and adults alike who influence youth with tools they need to change behaviours and attitudes.

The strength of our province lies in our people and in our communities. Sexual violence compromises that strength and the safety of our communities. It has a devastating impact on the people victimized by this horrendous crime and their families. It is simply unacceptable. It commands all of us to play a role in ensuring the safety of our sisters, our mothers, our daughters, our friends. By raising awareness of sexual violence prevention and by talking to children and youth about the importance of equality and respect in relationships, we are moving forward in our mission to make our communities safer for everyone.

I'd like everyone to reference a resource at the Ontario Women's Directorate Web site. It does help us talk about sexual violence. The Web site has information on the warning signs of sexual violence, advice on prevention and links to people who can help. It can be found at [www.ontariowomensdirectorat.org.on.ca](http://www.ontariowomensdirectorat.org.on.ca).

I want to give you just a couple of samples of those warning signs: Has your friend's appearance changed significantly, a major change in weight, for example? Has her schoolwork been suffering? These could be signs of depression, which often indicate abuse. Does your friend have a history of feeling anxious, distrustful or unsafe? Is your friend giving up things that used to be important to her? Is your friend's boyfriend extremely jealous and possessive? Does your friend's boyfriend call her demeaning names and put her down in front of other people? Has your friend stopped expressing her own opinion? I urge parents and student alike to visit our Web page. Read the kinds of things that may become apparent when you're looking at your own circle of friends and family.

I'd like to share an important campaign that ties into Sexual Assault Prevention Month and Mother's Day, the Daisy of Hope campaign. We're very proud to say today that Joy Freeman, the executive director of Nova Vita, launched this in the great riding of Brant. Once again, this initiative started in Brantford: Nova Vita Women's Services, in Dave Levac's riding of Brant. We're very proud once again to say that through the daisy pin, women's shelters across the province can raise awareness of domestic violence and profile the services that shelters provide to abused women and their children. All political parties in Ontario have recognized this campaign since 2001.

Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to ask my colleagues to recognize this campaign by wearing the Daisy of Hope pin during the month of May. You'll be showing your support for strong, safe communities that are free of sexual violence. By wearing this pin you will recognize the invaluable work of shelters in providing women and their children with support and care.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak to this Sexual Assault Prevention Month in the province of Ontario. It's a time when we have the opportunity to shed some light on a crime that most people don't want to talk about, and that, of course, is the crime of sexual assault.

This month has been recognized in Ontario since 1988. It's a way to create public awareness of sexual assault and improve the prevention of violence against women and all members of society.

As we know, sexual assault can take place between intimates, dating partners, friends, acquaintances or strangers. Rapes committed by acquaintances of the victims are the most common form of sexual assault, followed by sexual assaults by dating or other relationship partners. Sexual assaults, unfortunately, occur much more frequently than we know, because they are not always reported. In Canada, it's estimated that one out of every four women and one out of 10 men over the age of 18 will be sexually assaulted sometime during their lives. This is from Statistics Canada in 2001.

It is important, as we speak today about sexual assault and violence, that we recognize that men and children are

also too often the victims of sexual assault. The unfortunate reality is that these children are also the victims of abuse. If we have been following the story in the Toronto Star these past few days, it tells the disturbing story of the serial pedophile who, over the course of many years, sexually assaulted numerous young boys. According to the article, in 2003, 4,807 children between the ages of 6 to 13 were victims of sexual assault. Unfortunately, most of the abusers were relatives. Further, most children who suffer sexual assault are destroyed emotionally by it. They often end up involved in drugs, in prostitution, in violence and in crime.

As lawmakers, we have a tremendous responsibility to ensure that the appropriate measures are put in place to protect these children. The Canadian Panel on Violence against Women found that 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their husbands, their common-law partners or their boyfriends. The violence against women study conducted by Statistics Canada in 1993 revealed that one third of all women polled had actually experienced sexual assault, and that one quarter of all women reported being sexually assaulted by their spouse or partner. This finding suggests that for the sampled women, the sexual assault by a partner was even more likely to occur in their relationships than was physical assault or abuse.

#### 1450

However, as I said before, underreporting of these crimes presents a formidable obstacle to understanding the nature and the real extent of this problem. For example, researchers at Statistics Canada estimate that fewer than 10% of sexual assaults of people over 15 years of age are ever reported to Canadian police agencies, and only 1% of all date/acquaintance rapes ever come to the attention of law enforcement. So it is extremely important that we do what we can to influence social attitudes among young people in order to encourage them to inform their parents and certainly the law about sexual assault.

The youth of today deal with many issues surrounding sexual violence. Their issues are real, just as women's and men's issues are real. It is important that we give all victims of sexual abuse and violence the resources, the support and the solutions. We need to give them a voice. By focusing on these young people early, in particular, we have the opportunity to protect future generations. Together, I would encourage those in this House to do what we can in order to prevent sexual assault and violence.

**The Speaker:** From the minister's statement, I take it that you are asking for unanimous consent for the wearing of the buttons. Is that it? I think we do have it. Thank you.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** My colleagues have cited many statistics about sexual violence in Canada and Ontario, but we are so inundated with numbers that we sometimes fail to see these numbers as real women: our sisters, our daughters, our wives, our mothers. I think of my good and brave friend, Jane Doe,



who was sexually assaulted many years ago as she lay sleeping in her bed in her apartment building. And 25 years ago, Barbra Schlifer was returning home after celebrating her call to the bar of Ontario. It had been a day of dreams fulfilled and marked the start of a fulfilling and exciting career. Committed to social justice, she and her friends planned to open a law practice together that would provide representation to people who were abused, oppressed and marginalized. But that night, Barbra Schlifer was brutally sexually assaulted and murdered in the basement stairwell of her apartment building. Those are two very visible and well-known examples of women who have been sexually assaulted right here in our neighbourhoods: one who survived and one who died. Today we stand, I think, partly in remembering these women who were victims of such brutal crimes.

You apply this statistic, and you will see that one in every four Canadian women is sexually assaulted in her lifetime in our immediate setting. That translates into the fact that there are those among us here in this chamber right now and in the offices and hallways of this Legislature who have been or will be victims of such violence. I want to underscore that one in four does not capture the extent of the crisis, because sexual violence remains one of the most underreported crimes in this nation.

As we know, only one in 10 sexual assaults is reported. Victims are reluctant to inform the criminal justice system about acts of sexual violence, in part because of the stigma they feel personally and the stigma they or others receive from the system itself and society as a whole. Then, sexual assault, by virtue of how it is defined, does not capture all the kinds of sexual violence that take place. For example, sexual harassment is not, by definition, seen as a form of violence; misogyny, sexism. The limitations on what constitutes sexual violence in the eyes of the law lend to why we do not have accurate figures on how prevalent sexual violence is in our communities, in our workplaces, in our province and in our nation.

For reporting to increase, there needs to be an action plan to reform how our institutions and communities respond to sexual violence of any kind, and such a plan is critically important if the rate of violence is to start decreasing.

The current state of affairs, instead of being a deterrent, expresses leniency toward those who commit sexual violence and too often treats victims with indifference and, sometimes, hostility.

Examples that illustrate how the system perversely favours the perpetrators rather than the victims are also abundant. They range from audits of court proceedings that reveal that only 4% of cases tried—4%—lead to convictions, and that, in too many cases, acts of sexual violence are reduced to lesser charges, like misdemeanours. Many victims have some sort of relationship with the assaulter. After sensing that their credibility is being questioned because they may have known the accused, victims frequently withdraw the charges.

Despite the rising rate of violence against women, it is still not regarded as a priority area for many police units. For example, even in the aftermath of the Jane Doe audit and its own statistics that show one third of all calls they receive involve a transgression against a woman, commonly police still do not list violence against women as an area of strategic importance.

We still have a lot of work to do. I urge the Ontario government to come up with a comprehensive plan to measure and resolve the shortcomings toward sexual violence on every front.

#### BUDGET SPEECH

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I beg leave to inform the House that the Minister of Finance will be presenting his budget in this place, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on May 11, 2005.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week mayors from across northern Ontario met in Kenora to discuss, among other things, your new so-called fairer program for our cities and towns.

Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield says your new program is “easier to understand, [but] it’s not very palatable.... we have to tell the government that this doesn’t work.”

No wonder he is saying that, because Kenora is set to lose \$2.1 million, or 42% less each year, as a result of your “good-news program,” as you described it last week.

Who should the residents of Kenora believe? Should they believe the mayor, who says your new program doesn’t work, or should they believe you, who claims it is good news?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I want to remind the leader of the official opposition what it is that we are doing here and why we are so very proud of our new model, which is both fair and transparent. This is all about cleaning up the downloading mess created by the previous government.

I’ll remind my friend that the Provincial Auditor, in his 2001 annual report, said that the Conservative downloading and subsequent community reinvestment fund caused municipalities “a significant, negative fiscal impact.” He went on to say that the unfairness that the policy created has been growing over time ever since downloading first took place. So this is about a government taking responsibility for cleaning up yet another mess left by the previous Conservative government. It is fair, it is transparent, it needed to be done, and we are proud to have done it.

**Mr. Tory:** I think it's time for the Premier to take responsibility for what is happening to people like the Kenora taxpayers. You are not cleaning up anything in Kenora; you are cleaning out the pockets of the taxpayers in Kenora. That's what you're doing.

1500

Ignace Mayor Bryan Brown says that his town will not be able to handle more cuts. He was quoted this weekend as saying, "We've virtually used up all of our resources and we've laid off probably more people than we're legally allowed to. You just don't get it."

Premier, Ignace is in line for a 12.5% cut in annual funding under your new program that you call "good news for all." Who should the residents of Ignace believe: you, who says this is good news, or Mayor Brown, who says they just can't cut any more? How is that cleaning anything up?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I know that the leader of the official opposition will be very interested in hearing what Mayor Bill Enouy from Kirkland Lake had to say. He sent us a letter and said, "I have been presenting our case since the mid-1980s and this is the first time that the government of the day has listened and taken action. Without your understanding and timely moves, our town would be facing huge tax increases, little, if any, capital works and a desperate future."

"Once again, thank you for your good work."

We're pleased to hear from Mayor Enouy, and we're pleased to hear from other mayors from across the province.

**Mr. Tory:** I just don't understand how the Premier can stand here and talk about how thankful people are, when in fact it's coming out of the pockets of other cities and towns in the province of Ontario.

Pickle Lake Mayor Roy Hoffman said that each household in his town pays \$2,076 in taxes already. He says that his town is going to have to raise taxes as a result of your changes in funding. Pickle Lake, according to your own Ministry of Finance Web site information, is set to lose 30% in annual funding under your so-called fairer program.

In the Kenora Daily Miner and News, Mayor Hoffman said on Friday, "Our community has a financial crisis. We're just going to have to throw the keys to the province."

Premier, who should the residents of Pickle Lake believe? Maybe he should have a meeting with the mayor of Kirkland Lake and they can decide how to sort this out together. They're in a crisis as a result of your 30% cut. How do you answer them?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** We have told the people of Ontario where we stand when it comes to developing a better program, one that is both fair and transparent. I've yet to hear Mr. Tory's alternative. Apparently, he's going to supply additional funding to all of those who claim that they are somehow getting less. Just to be clear, he's going to take \$2.4 billion out of health care; he's going to fund private schools in the province of Ontario; and now—another very expensive financial commitment on

his part—he is going to be providing additional monies, apparently, for some of those communities who claim that they're getting less.

One more thing I want to make clear: Last week, my friend made reference to the community of Belleville. He said that they'd be coming up short. I know that he'd want to hear what some people from Belleville have to say. I quote from the Belleville Intelligencer: "City treasurer Brian Cousins says programs continue to be delivered and services are remaining at the status quo despite claims by provincial Conservative leader John Tory that the city will have to make cuts."

"John Tory also said the province's new deal would leave municipalities in a crisis situation. Cousins said he would not agree with that statement."

### OBSTETRICAL CARE

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** We'll ask Mr. Cousins again in a year and see what he has to say at that time about the people you're giving the short end of the stick to.

My question is to the Premier. Three weeks ago, your Minister of Health stood in the House—actually, he was outside the House—and he mused, "It is not necessarily sensible to have an obstetrics program if a hospital only has a volume of 50 or 60 births a year."

Three weeks ago, I posed a question to that same minister, asking him which communities would lose their childbirth services as a result of your apparent change in policy. Premier, can you tell us today, after all this time we've had to study this, based on whatever the criteria are that the minister is applying at a given moment, which hospitals and which communities will lose their birth programs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I'm pleased to speak to this on behalf of the Minister of Health, who could not be here today. And I'll speak to the higher principles; I don't have the specifics that the member opposite seeks.

I have said that we are determined to find efficiencies in a way that does not compromise the quality of services that we are delivering at present to Ontarians. Furthermore, by way of our wait-time strategy, for example, we are seeking to improve the quality of services that we provide to the people of Ontario. Mr. Tory may be trying to have Ontarians believe that we are about to compromise the quality of care, but I can assure you that our intention is to ensure that we get the very best value for the limited dollars, the precious dollars, that we receive from Ontario taxpayers. We want to do that in a way that not only does not compromise the quality of care, but in fact enhances the quality of their care.

**Mr. Tory:** The Premier said that he didn't have specifics at hand. He might well undertake to get those, because in fact there are 18 hospitals that serve countless numbers of communities across the province that fall under that new cut-off. I'll just give you some examples and perhaps ask you to respond to these: Manitoulin



Health Centre in Little Current only performed 56 births in 2003—that's the last year for which numbers are available; Red Lake memorial hospital performed 47; Lady Minto Hospital in Cochrane, 46; Kirkland and District Hospital in Kirkland Lake—you were talking about them a moment ago—performed 36.

Premier, these northern communities are deserving of some special consideration. Can you stand in your place today and guarantee those residents in and around Little Current, Red Lake, Cochrane and Kirkland Lake that their local childbirth services will not be cut by your government? Can you guarantee that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The leader of the official opposition is being selective in his recollection of statements that I made in this House. I specifically said that we would have to give special consideration to remote communities and to northern communities. In some cases it simply will not make sense to provide for consolidation, because of the low number of services in communities that are very remote. It just doesn't make any sense because that would, in fact, compromise the quality of care. So I say it again: We have a responsibility—and I believe Mr. Tory shares this sentiment—to give the best value for those dollars that we're receiving from our taxpayers. We want to do that in a way that does not compromise quality of care for Ontarians.

**Mr. Tory:** It would be so simple if you wanted to come into this House any day of the week and then say, based on a threshold your minister articulated, that those communities, I think all the ones I have mentioned and the ones I'm about to mention, are not going to suffer any withdrawal of those services. That's all you have to do to actually answer a question. So let me just add to the list, and I will request that the Premier come back and tell us that these places are not losing their childbirth services: Wilson Memorial General Hospital in Marathon, 24 births; Lady Dunn Health Centre in Wawa; Wingham and District Hospital, which is not in the north, 32; McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay, 11.

Would you please just stand in your place today or undertake to come back and tell us that these services will not be withdrawn, pursuant to your own statement that these kinds of communities will be given special consideration—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. Order. The Minister of Community and Social Services needs to be quiet. I wasn't able to hear the last part of the question because of the interruption. If you need 10 seconds just to finish—

**Mr. Tory:** I can repeat it. Will the Premier stand up and guarantee all of the communities I've asked about today, pursuant to his own commitment that remote and northern communities will be given special consideration, will keep these childbirth services in their local communities? It's easy to stand up and say, "Yes, I'll give that guarantee." Please do it.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The leader of the official opposition is engaging in unhelpful speculation and scare-

mongering. It's outright scaremongering. Nobody at any time, as a representative of this government, has ever suggested that we would remove those programs from those hospitals. I think it's important to keep in mind, as an interesting contrast here, that we've been on the job for close to 18 months. We've invested close to \$3 billion more in our public health care system. We've also invested in that \$1.7 billion in our hospitals. Now, if people want to be concerned about what the future holds, they might ask themselves, "What would happen to our health care system when that leader, in that prospective government, takes \$2.4 billion out of Ontario's health care system?" If there's something to worry about, I would suggest that would be it.

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, last week the Ombudsman announced a special investigation into special needs agreements for children with severe disabilities. He said the current situation is absolutely unconscionable. You said: "When it came to my attention that there were more families that were still considering giving up their children"—and some actually did give up their children—"to receive services, I immediately acted." But, Minister, the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy warned you three months ago that 30 families were at imminent risk of losing custody of their severely disabled children in order to obtain the services that they needed desperately. That report is dated February 9 of this year. Why did you tell Ontarians and the press that you immediately acted, when the report from the child advocate's office shows that's not the case?

1510

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I thank the honourable member for her question. It gives me a chance to clarify. The report was written in February, it was given to me in March, and I did indeed immediately act. Those 30 families were given the services they needed, following the process of the communities solving the problems and finding the resources for those children, and they didn't have to go to the courts to give up custody of their children.

The Ombudsman is saying that this is still going on. I welcome his work; I welcome the work of my ministry, which actually precedes the Ombudsman's work. When the reports are given to me, I will look at the recommendations, because I truly believe, as we all do in this chamber, that no parent today should give up their child in order to get them the help they need.

**Ms. Horwath:** The child advocate's report from February 9 is just the latest in a long series of reports that are condemning the government's inaction on special-needs agreements for severely disabled children. Here are two other reports that are on my desk from the child advocate, one from June 2000 and one from January

2001. They include victim impact statements like this one: "I am the mother of a nine-year-old girl with special needs...."

"The stress of having a child with special needs indirectly led to the breakdown of my marriage, isolation from friends and at times even relatives, numerous health problems, depression and eventually despair...."

"I did what any desperate person would do, even though my heart knew it wasn't right: I placed the custody of my child in CAS.... We should never have been forced to give up custody in order to get service for our child."

Minister, that heart-wrenching story was written in June 2000. How can you tell us in April 2005 that you acted immediately to help these families and their children?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I'd like to remind the member that we weren't the government in June 2000. I'd also like to tell the whole chamber here that this is a problem that has been going on for decades. We will solve this problem.

For over a decade and a half, this area has had a lack of investment—that's children's mental health and children's treatment centres—for various reasons. In our first year of government alone, we put in \$74 million for children's mental health and children's treatment centres: \$200 million, all in all, of new spending for children of this province.

I'm not going to insult the intelligence of the member opposite or of anyone else in this chamber by saying that we're going to solve this overnight. We're not. But we are well on our way and are meeting our goal of helping these children and their families.

**Ms. Horwath:** This week, Anne Larcade will come to Queen's Park on behalf of her severely disabled son Alexandre. She says that your ministry failed to serve the needs of her son. She has launched a lawsuit saying that you failed to provide clear and consistent guidelines for special-needs agreements and failed to provide adequate alternative services for her son.

We've heard this story before. In 2001, an MPP rose in this House and said that the "government is breaking the law, that your government has a legal obligation to provide services to their special sons and daughters." Who said that? The chair of the Liberal caucus, Michael Gravelle. He knew this was happening four years ago.

Minister, can you guarantee to Anne and her son Alexandre, and to hundreds of other families with special-needs children, that this time you will follow the law?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I can commit to the member opposite that we're working as hard as we can and, for the first time in over a decade, are investing significantly in services so that we can reduce the wait list. The answer isn't to bump one child off a wait list for another one who comes to this chamber. That would be unfair and unethical. The solution is to build capacity so that all children can access these services. That's what we're doing. I wish we could do it overnight; it's just not

possible. We're working very hard, and we will meet the goal of helping these children.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question?

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Let me remind you of what you said last week: "When it came to my attention that there were more families that were still considering giving up their children—and some actually did—to receive services, I immediately acted." Minister, you said in response to an earlier question that the 30 families that were on the list submitted to you by the child advocate all received the services that they needed through a community process. I can tell you that that's just not true. Cynthia Cameron and her son Jesse were at Queen's Park on March 31. I was here, and I asked you to consider entering into a special-needs agreement with Cynthia Cameron and her son.

On April 7, your government wrote to her and you said no. Jesse is still in a group home in Barrie, not in London. He is still on a wait list for a residential placement in London, and he has been on that list for two years. Most importantly, his family is still at risk of losing custody because the CAS is still involved, even though this isn't a protection issue. Minister, why would you tell this House that the situation of these 30 families was resolved, when that's not true?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** The family that the honourable member mentions has come to this chamber, and yes, we have written to this family. We do not enter into special-needs agreements. Our solution is not to do one-offs, as has been done in the past. Our solution is to build capacity, so that all children who have severe special needs will access these services, not just those who have the political astuteness to come to this gallery. That's unfair, that's unethical, and until we build capacity, we will not be doing these unethical events.

**Ms. Martel:** Just to remind the minister, I wrote to her about the situation involving Cynthia Cameron in November 2004. Cynthia wrote to the ministry earlier than that. She finally got a response to her situation after she was in here, and she got that response on April 7, Minister. That's how quickly you responded to her and her needs.

But let me reiterate. You told this House that the 30 families got a solution that they wanted through a community process, and that is not true. Your government could have used a community process to resolve Cynthia's problem and the problems of other families who, I suspect, are on that list and not resolved. You've got a document called Decision-Making Guidelines for Specialized Support for Children/Youth with Complex Multiple Needs. The guidelines say that your ministry has to ensure that they look at the community resources to be sure that families don't have to go to the CAS to get the care that they need. That was developed in July of 2004. It has never been implemented by your ministry. Minister, I ask you again, why is your government not even using its own policy to ensure that families with special needs, who are in crises, are not forced to go to the CAS to get the care they need?



**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** The issue here, again, is the lack of resources. We are building capacity so that all children can access these resources. Having said that, when this came to my attention that this was still going on, I directed my ministry to meet with all of the regional programs and all of the community agencies to address this. They have told me they will give me a report and recommendations in June. The Ombudsman said he will give me one even sooner, in May, which I welcome. As soon as I get the recommendations, I will act on them. In the meantime, we are building capacity to address the needs of all children, not just those who are brought into this gallery.

**Ms. Martel:** I don't apologize for bringing Cynthia Cameron here, because it was the only way she could get a response from this ministry and this minister. That's the sad reality. This is not a new issue for the government. The matter of parents giving up custody of their children in order to get special-needs agreements was the subject of the child advocate's report in 2000, 2001 and again in February 2005 under this government. Despite the minister saying that she acted immediately to respond to the needs of these children, nothing has changed for Cynthia Cameron and her son Jesse. They were on that list that was given to you by Judy Finlay. Your government has done nothing to implement a policy developed in July 2004 to use mediation and to use a community process to ensure that families get the support they need without having to go to the CAS. Despite the fact that Judy Finlay also recommended to you that you should bring forward legislation to ensure that families would get the services that they need without having to go to the CAS, you say you're not going to do that. Frankly, Minister, your handling of this has been dismal. What are you going to do?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** The member is pretending that we are not following our own policies. That's not true. Those families did follow due process and did get the help they need. If the honourable member is talking about one of the exceptions, I understand that there are families that are going to desperate lengths to get resources for their children faster. That's not a solution. Special-needs agreements, which are nothing more but one-offs, is not the solution; building capacity is the solution.

I want to remind that member that when she was in government she cut funding to children's mental health. She cut it by \$40 million in their second year. In our first year alone, we put \$25 million in. We put \$50 million into children's treatment centres. We put \$38 million this year into children's mental health. There has never been this much investment in children in over a decade. We're proud of our record, and we will solve this problem.

1520

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** To the Premier. Your Minister of Education has unilaterally negotiated

contracts for teacher unions: four-year, 10.5% increases over the last few weeks. Premier, can you tell us how much the total package that your Minister of Education has negotiated will cost taxpayers?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I'm going to give the supplementary to the minister, but let me just say how proud I am of him and the work he has been doing.

We are close; we are on the verge of having an unprecedented situation obtain in the province of Ontario where we're going to have peace and stability in our schools. We'll all be focusing on the job at hand, which is improving the quality of education for our children. I would ask you and Ontarians to compare our record that we're working hard to develop with the previous government's record, when 24 million school days were lost as a result of the approach brought by that government to our teachers and our schoolchildren alike.

Yes, I am proud of the work that this minister is doing. I am proud of the environment we are creating in the province of Ontario, where learning is coming first.

**Mr. Klees:** I do hope that the Premier will not deflect the supplementary to the Minister of Education, because my question to the Premier is this: At no point during the election campaign did you ever promise a four-year, 10.5% increase to teachers, but what you did promise was that you would fund treatment for autistic children beyond the age of six. You now have a court order telling you to do that and yet you're not prepared to do that.

I would like to know from this Premier how he can justify billions of dollars for teacher contracts and fail to keep his promise to autistic children in this province.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the minister.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** The basic idea here, of course, is one that's very hard for the member opposite to understand. The idea here, simply put, is that students win; teachers win; school boards win. There isn't a need to have people fighting one another in order for our school system to work properly. It's a very tough concept, I understand, and it stands in direct contrast to what has happened.

In point of fact, there will be more special education resource teachers as part of what comes forward. In the high schools, it will be part of the resources that will flow back in as part of the 1,300 new teachers announced so far.

What I would say about the cost of this arrangement is that it's less than 1% of the total cost of spending on education. The important part is, the part that is benefiting teachers is also benefiting students—the very same teachers who will relieve some of the workload assignments that his government left gnarled up around silly numbers rather than worry about kids. Those will be fixed. What we will get in their place is more people for phys ed, more for arts, more for music—more help in the disgraceful dropout rate left to us by the last government, and more help, ultimately, in smaller class sizes now in secondary to match the ones in primary.

## FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you'll know that last Thursday more than 1,000 people in the Kapuskasing area gathered in front of the Tembec mill in order to protest your government's inaction when it comes to good hydro policy that would allow Tembec to operate with a hydroelectric bill that is reasonable and, at the same time, to protest your minister's response to what has happened in the community of Opasatika. Everybody at that rally had the same thing to say, and that is, your government's plan is missing in action when it comes to dealing with the challenges that face us in northeastern and northwestern Ontario.

My question to you is simply this. We in northern Ontario have a number of issues we need to have dealt with. We're not getting the response from your government. Will you agree today to meet with representatives from the Kapuskasing area in order to discuss the issues that are facing communities like Opasatika and Kapuskasing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Let me say that I've had the opportunity to meet with a number of representatives from northern communities, including, in fact, just this morning, Mr. Buchanan from Buchanan Forest Products, and I was pleased to be able to do so.

Let me say to the member opposite that if you're really interested in setting up a meeting, you can just come over and talk to me; you can tell me that you have an interested community, and I'll do my very best to ensure that we can make that meeting happen.

**Mr. Bisson:** Premier, I'm going to take that as a yes for the meeting, and I appreciate that. But I want to be clear on what people have to say. A number of issues are facing us across northern Ontario when it comes to the forestry industry.

Your Minister of Natural Resources is allowing forestry companies to become lumber barons, to decide that they're going to take wood from one community, divert it to another, and shut down sawmills in communities like Kirkland Lake, Chapleau, Opasatika and others.

We have hydroelectric problems. If you look at what's happening in Kapuskasing right now, as across the north when it comes to all pulp and paper mills and the mining sector, hydro prices are going through the roof. As we know, last week it was announced that one mill is going to shut down. Others are probably not far behind.

We're going to be coming to you specifically, because we believe your failed hydro policies and the forestry policies of your Minister of Natural Resources have been a disaster. We're looking forward to your government changing direction on what is, quite frankly, an abysmal record.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The Minister of Natural Resources would like to speak to this.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources):** The member knows that I have one of your mayors, Roger Sigouin, the mayor of Hearst, on my forest sector

competitiveness council. We've made sure that we're involving the communities, the municipalities, the First Nation communities. Labour is on that committee, as are the companies. You know that we've been working very hard in the last few months. Within about two weeks, I will be receiving the final edition of that report. I want to assure the member that this government will be acting on that report, because the McGuinty government believes in the forest sector and its contribution to the economy of this province.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe):** My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. As you know, there is a substantial need for affordable housing across Ontario. For eight years, the previous government sat by and watched as the list for affordable housing grew longer and longer. They watched as people who were already struggling to make ends meet tightened their belts even further, having to decide what was more important, heat or food or clothes, because their rent was eating up their income.

I was pleased to see that you and your federal counterpart Minister Fontana announced a massive \$602-million investment in affordable housing in Ontario last Friday. Can you tell me what this announcement means for Ontarians in communities across this province, Minister?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I want to thank the member for the question. The new federal-provincial housing agreement represents a giant leap forward for affordable housing in the province of Ontario. With this investment, together with our federal and municipal partners, we will create over 15,000 new units of affordable housing, as well as housing allowances to provide immediate assistance for approximately 5,000 Ontario families in need, for communities right across our province. This means the largest single affordable housing investment in a decade, and it means housing assistance for people suffering from mental illness, victims of domestic violence, the working poor and low- to moderate-income families looking to purchase a home.

Our government believes that safe, secure, affordable housing is a basic human need, and with our \$602-million investment, Ontario and the federal government will address the need for some 20,000 Ontario families.

**Mr. Ramal:** Minister, it's good news. It's a good day for those who have long waited to hear that their government is back in the affordable housing business after so long. Ontarians shouldn't have to choose between feeding their children or heating their homes; with last week's announcement, they won't have to.

Minister, now that we have committed to the affordable housing program, which is a partnership program between governments and the non-profit and private sectors, we must ensure that we have strong relationships with these partners. Do you have plans to consult important partners in the municipal, non-profit and private sectors about the new affordable housing?



1530

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Again, I want to thank the member opposite, because he rightly points out the importance of developing that partnership. We're proud of the approach we've taken to date in developing that partnership with federal partners, municipal partners, non-profit and with the private sector as well. We've listened to those stakeholders during intensive consultations over the past 18 months, and we aim to develop the very best affordable housing program possible and we will do it again as we prepare for future announcements about the details of the program design.

Those efforts to listen to and to collaborate with our key stakeholders are examples of why partners like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario are saying, "This agreement is an excellent example of how all three orders of government are working co-operatively to serve our communities, province and country better." We're going to continue with this approach because it has proven so successful as our government moves toward building even stronger communities.

#### GREENBELT

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln):** I have a question to the Premier. Premier, municipal leaders and other advocates of the greenbelt have said the greenbelt municipalities should get special consideration under programs like the municipal partnership fund or the COMRIF program. Do you agree?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources):** We continually get these questions about the greenbelt from the opposition party. It was the opposition party, over the years of the great tradition of Bill Davis, that established the Niagara Escarpment Commission and, as of late, the Oak Ridges moraine commission. If you add that up, that's 800,000 acres. Maybe this is an acreage envy situation—I don't know—because we added a million acres with the greenbelt. Maybe that's what this is about. Why don't you get on board, because you always have supported greenbelts, and support ours today?

**Mr. Hudak:** It's certainly very disappointing that the Premier takes the concerns of municipal leaders in the greenbelt so lightly that he hands it off to the Minister of Natural Resources to give some other argument altogether. I'm sorry he has that disdain; maybe he'll accept the supplementary.

Premier, there's a series of municipalities, like Ajax, Stouffville and Scugog, that did not get their COMRIF grants, others that have had significant cuts under the municipal funding program, and then there are those that are losers in both respects—Pelham, Thorold and Lincoln—that have had their funding cut and their capital programs denied.

The Minister of Natural Resources probably doesn't know this, but you should, as should the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Section 6 of the greenbelt legislation gives you the authority, and I'd say the responsibility, to make sure that greenbelt municipalities are supported in other ministries' initiatives. Premier, surely you agree that greenbelt municipalities should have special consideration?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I'd like to give a couple of quotes in the member's own area, first of all from Tim Rigby, the St. Catharines mayor: "While this announcement's immediate and substantive effect is the continued and expanded enhancement of the Glendale-Merritt area, it is certain to have a ripple effect on the rest of St. Catharines as it will be recognized that the vision does become a reality in our city." Also, from the mayor of Niagara Falls: "This is a very important project for the residents of Niagara Falls. We are very excited to work with our federal and provincial partners to proceed as quickly as possible with these upgrades that will have such a positive impact on our residents."

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, the residents of Weston are very concerned about the environmental and safety implications associated with the proposed GO Transit air-rail link project. You yourself have the ability to increase the present class B environmental assessment to a class C assessment if any one of three conditions exist: if there are more than 50 kilometres of rail; if there is something new that GO Transit does not normally do; or if there is serious public controversy. In this case, all three of those situations are in existence. As a matter of fact, on the last one alone the residents had to have their meeting cancelled by the fire marshal two weeks ago because of the size of the crowd. Last week's rescheduled meeting attracted 2,500 residents. If this does not reflect serious public controversy, we are at a loss to understand what does. My question to you is, will you instruct GO Transit to bump up the class B environmental assessment of the GO air-rail link proposal to a full class C environmental assessment?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member for asking this question. We are in the public information sessions at this point in time. The purpose of these public information sessions is to get input from the public.

There have been some concerns expressed, and we are absolutely determined to address those questions for the public. If that requires that we adopt a different environmental assessment process, we will look at that. But at this time, we are at the very initial stages of this process.

**Mr. Prue:** Minister, you're only going part way. I want you to go all the way here today. Given that one of the proponents of the project, SNC-Lavalin, is also the company hired by GO Transit, to the tune of some

\$600,000, to undertake the environmental assessment, the people of Weston are well justified in their concern that the process may not be carried out in a fashion in keeping with the interests of their community. Moving to a full environmental assessment of this project will provide Weston residents the open inquiry that they demand.

In fact, your own colleague in government, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, stated in a letter to the community, "I have written to the Ministers of Transportation and Environment to express my concerns over this proposed new rail service and request consideration for a more detailed and comprehensive evaluation of the impacts of this proposal on our community."

My question to you is direct: Your own minister wants to do it. Will you do it? Will you do it today?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me say this. The Minister of Economic Development has been very active on this file. He has talked to me about the issues of the residents, and we are listening very carefully to what the residents have to say. They also have the option to bump up the environmental assessment process if it's required.

I want to assure the people of Weston that we are absolutely determined to have the proper consultations with the people of the Weston area. Whatever it will require to address their concerns, we are absolutely committed to doing that.

## EDUCATION

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Today is the first day of Education Week in Ontario. It is a chance for everyone in Ontario to express their support for public education.

Public education took a beating in Ontario under the Tories. They created a crisis in our schools and took \$2 billion out of the education system.

I know that our Liberal government is different. The Liberal government is putting money into the education system. I think we all know the results of the horrific Tory record: lost teachers, poor student performance and crumbling infrastructure. Contrast their record with our record: groundbreaking agreements with Ontario's teachers, good outcomes for every student and a plan for rebuilding education infrastructure.

Minister, as Education Week begins today, what are the government's long-term goals for education in Ontario?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I would again enjoin everyone in this House to be part of Education Week, if they can, between now and the end of constituency week: go back to school; visit their local ridings. We look forward to what they find there and also what they bring back.

The first stage of our plan is to reinvigorate the school system to bring around an attitude of respect, which can't be bought but really is about treating people with respect. We're seeing the dividends of that now. Yes, there is an

investment, because the basic replacement of things as fundamental as buildings has to be done. Everything we're doing is to set up the system for progress. Peace and stability is for progress. The buildings that are there are to show the respect and the function for progress.

We've set goals for literacy and numeracy and for student success in high school. We intend to meet those, very significantly, in the next number of years. We invite everyone in this House to do what has happened in other jurisdictions: Make education a true partnership. Let's work on making sure that we get an education advantage for our kids in Ontario.

1540

**Mrs. Sandals:** It is inspiring to hear what this government is doing for education in Ontario. It is inspiring to hear that we have a real, tangible, long-term plan.

It is obvious that this government's long-term plan for education provides real benefits to our children, our educators and our society. I've talked to many parents back in my riding. I've visited many schools and talked to many educators from all over Ontario.

The message was clear during the last election: Ontario flat-out rejects the Tory destruction of our education system and the stale, destructive policies of the ill-fated Common Sense Revolution, which the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey supported.

The people of Ontario voted for a new deal. They chose change, and the Liberals are delivering. Minister, how will the long-term vision for education in Ontario benefit other children?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** I appreciate the question. The challenge, of course, it poses to every party in this House is to be able to get a clear accomplishment from this system. We believe it's there. Myself and the Premier of the province have taken a great, direct interest in this. We know that we have these ambitious goals for the system, of taking it where it has never been before in terms of outcomes, in terms of a cohesive system. The good news is that, somewhere in the province, some of that is already happening.

We have a tremendous infrastructure in Ontario that needs to be built upon, and the leadership of that, frankly, should be shared in this House. It has been rejected by the party opposite. In part, the voters rejected them, and for some reason they cling to this idea of private schools and private advantage.

We say, instead, that the essential Canadian and Ontario idea is about conveying an advantage, unlocking the potential of every single student in this province. We will not deviate from that, and we enjoin everyone in this House and across the province to join us in that goal. People as diverse as the C.D. Howe Institute and people from across the social spectrum agree that we should have in this province an education advantage, because our economic policy is our education policy, and our social policy is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. New question.



## ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, unfortunately, most of the energy coming out of your ministry's office is in the form of RFP announcements, appointments, re-announcements and yet more appointments. The typical Ontario consumer wants to know when this cascading series of announcements is going to end so that you can get on with the business of managing Ontario's electricity system.

Minister, today you announced the appointments of board members for the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity Systems Operator. I noticed that many of the appointments were from outside jurisdictions. On the other hand, I'm very disappointed that knowledgeable individuals from Ontario such as Jack Gibbons of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance and Tom Adams from Energy Probe are not part of your energy plan for Ontario.

I have two separate questions, if you could answer them, please. What is the selection process for membership on the board, and can you tell the people of Ontario what remuneration is paid, or is this just another raise for your friends in the electricity sector?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Where is this place called Lobby?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Lobby: That's where the Tim Hudak fundraiser is, at 192 Bloor Street East. Tickets are \$250 each; \$1,000 for an executive circle.

I'll tell you what we're doing: We're cleaning up the mess that government left. In the last 10 years we've lost 5,000 megawatts of capacity, with nothing being generated—nothing. We've announced 5,000 new megawatts to replace that.

Number two: We've applied freedom of information and public disclosure on OPG and all of our entities so that we'll see no more contracts to Tory insiders, like we saw under that government.

When we assumed office, Ontario's reserve capacity was 10%—half of what it should be. We've doubled it, according to the IESO, for the year 2005. We're safer, more secure, with lower-priced power than we were the day you left office. What are we doing? We're fixing the mess you created.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Actually, your announcement last week was an announcement made by Elizabeth Witmer back in 2001. In fact, the work done by the energy conservation and supply task force is yet another report that is serving as the blueprint for all the changes initiated by our minister, John Baird, at the time.

Your ministry, under Dalton McGuinty, is creating an electricity bureaucracy. Consumers are alarmed over how much their electricity bills have increased—some 30%. Let's be true to the people of Ontario. This is yet more bureaucracy by the McGuinty government. What I consider is the true independence of the Conservation Bureau. That issue was brought up during Bill 100, yet

you've subsumed them under the Ontario Power Authority, which clearly is not what the people of Ontario want.

What are you going to do to provide the people of Ontario with a plan for reliable and affordable electricity in Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** We're undoing everything they did. That's the key. This, coming from a government that did nothing on conservation. Do you know what they did? They put an artificial price cap on, which not only didn't encourage conservation, it encouraged the opposite. So we've dealt with that. We've appointed a new chief conservation officer who's one of the leading experts in this country on energy efficiency. He'll be in place on May 13, which I believe is his first day.

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** What did Jim Wilson say?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Jim Wilson said that conservation doesn't work. He said there was no place for it, and that was borne out in your government's policies. That party, Mr. Tory's party, has a shameful record on energy: no conservation, price freezes that stifle generation. We've moved to fix it. We've moved to fix the fact that Mr. Marchese's party cancelled all conservation programs while they were buying rain forests in Costa Rica. We take a serious approach to our province's energy security and future. I invite the parties opposite to join with Premier McGuinty and this government in providing cleaner, reliable—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. New question?

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** My question is to the Minister of Education. At 11 o'clock today, children across this province and across Canada stood up and sang for Music Monday.

In my riding of Beaches–East York, the Earl Haig Junior Public School choir is busy preparing to showcase its amazing talent at the TDSB festival at Massey Hall on Wednesday night. Earl Haig's choir is the pride of our community and it is the glue that holds the school together. It had, up until recently, a dedicated music specialist. Their choir has won awards, competitions, sung our national anthem at baseball games, even performed here at Queen's Park. But next year there's going to be no music specialist. There is going to be no money under your funding formula.

Minister, can you please explain to this House how your government can justify a funding formula that would decimate such a successful musical program at that inner-city school?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** Go after the boards, Gerard.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I would just note that the member opposite is being bush-whacked by his own critic, saying, "Go after the boards."

I say that that's not the style of this government. I know it's hard for the two parties opposite to give up that reflex. I would have wished that, in keeping with Music

Monday, the member's question had been a bit more harmonious with the actual times and what's happening out there, but there was a group here from Jarvis Collegiate. They did a terrific job serenading some of the members, hoping for that effect.

Mr. Speaker, you know, and I think the member opposite knows, that the financial decisions made by boards are made after they receive their allocations from the province. They've made no decisions because they've received no allocations—not yet, at least—from the province. Those will be forthcoming very shortly. But one thing that is sure is the new allocation that we have advised the boards about for 1,300 specialist teachers in public and elementary schools, that includes for the first time in a long time music and the arts. Phys ed has not been factored in. A significant number of those teachers will be available this fall, so we know that the news, whatever it is today, will only get better for the students of Earl Haig and around the province.

**Mr. Prue:** Minister, the parents, the principal, the vice-principal, everybody who's associated with Earl Haig Collegiate wants an answer today.

Let me tell you about Earl Haig school. Like many inner-city schools, a large portion of the kids at that school come from low-income families. These are families that cannot afford to take music classes outside of the school. The choir program at Earl Haig gave them a real opportunity to excel.

The problem is that your government has not put any real new money into the system. You're going to stand there and talk about the billions, but I have to tell you that I think even Ernie Eves gave more money for these types of programs in inner-city schools. What these schools need is sustained funding from the province, not once a year while they have to scramble, so they can provide a real kind of curriculum for our children.

Minister, can you please tell us what your government is going to do to ensure that the kids of Earl Haig Junior Public School will be able to keep their choir next year?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Again, perhaps Earl Haig is the destination this member has in mind to go and visit and to see. He would find that there are approximately 30 fewer students projected for next year. That has raised some concerns, and there is an almost 5% drop expected in the student body. There is a speculative outline being made by the board, which he knows, but he brings it into this House. He would rather raise concerns than solve problems. That's been the hallmark of his party, and that's why it sits where it sits today.

I will say this to you: We have provided resources to the board. They already know what some of them are; they will soon know what all of them are. I'd be happy to work with the member opposite to make sure that we not only maintain but sustain a better program for music, for the arts. We've made that commitment, we've allocated the funding, and I expect it to be in evidence at Earl Haig Junior Public School and in all other schools around the province.

## ELECTRICITY GENERATION

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. I've always been a vocal opponent of coal-burning electricity generation, and last week I was extremely pleased and proud to be at Byngmount Beach Public School when we announced the closure of Lakeview generation station for good. Lakeview is the first of Ontario's five coal-fired generating stations to close.

The residents in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore know all too well the effects of air pollution. Whether it be from cardiac, respiratory or neurological health problems, they know that smog in our air causes much suffering for Ontarian families.

We've heard a lot of hot air from the opposition when it comes to coal-fired electricity generation. Now that Toronto's biggest source of air pollution is no longer in operation, can you highlight the improvements to our air quality that we will see in all of our communities as a result of the closure? I can tell you that these are improvements that my community is very much looking forward to.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Our government is committed to replacing coal with the cleanest, most affordable potential power sources in Ontario. We will do so, and are doing so, in a way that protects our supply.

Lakeview accounted for 26% of the region's SO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 8% of its NO<sub>x</sub> emissions. As a result, Lakeview will be the first coal-fired station that will be closing, the largest polluter in the greater Toronto area. It was closed and has stopped running. As of last Saturday, it was put into retirement. This is the equivalent of taking 500,000 cars off our roads.

Coal is costing the people of Ontario more than the number on their electricity bill. Our cost-benefit analysis shows that the true cost of coal is in air-pollution-related illnesses, hospital visits and premature deaths. The study found a relationship between increased air pollution due to coal-fired generation and up to 668 premature deaths.

**Ms. Broten:** The environmental and health impacts of burning coal are undeniable. My riding is very close to the Lakeview site in Mississauga and feels double the effects of pollution, not only in our air but in our water in our lake. Yet there are naysayers, people who have said that we shouldn't shut down Ontario's coal plants, people who say that coal really isn't all that bad—people like the Leader of the Opposition, who announced last week that he supports coal and would keep dirty, coal-burning plants running in Ontario, or the environment critic, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, who said a little more than six months ago in this Legislature, "If you think you're going to close down Lakeview by 2005, good luck."

Minister, I'm pretty certain that it wasn't good luck that enabled our government to shut down Lakeview, the GTA's single largest source of air pollution. I would ask you to provide us with some details as to what factors



contributed to and enabled us to make this difficult but necessary decision.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I can tell the members opposite, particularly the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, that the reason he said, “Good luck,” is that when they left office, in spite of their commitment, nothing, nada, had been done to close Lakeview. We had to put together Hydro One and a number of others so that the greater Toronto area would not lose power as a result of this. We spent, and they spent nothing to close it. Hydro One invested \$170 million. We made that order after we came to office. Nothing had even been started, in spite of the fact that their commitment was more than two years old. I’d also like to remind the members opposite that while they talk a good game about Lakeview, they did nothing to shut it. Now we hear that Mr. Tory wants coal maybe till 2015, maybe till 2020.

This government established a very challenging goal. We are moving toward it. We are doing it in a prudent and responsible fashion. We will get those coal plants closed. We are on tight deadlines. If we miss, and I don’t know if we’re going to miss, we’ll be very close, because we understand the benefits—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. New question.

**Mr. Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a question for the Minister of Energy. While travelling across the north last week, I stopped in Atikokan. Minister, you will recall Atikokan because you were there last year, addressing the chamber of commerce. At that time, you told the people of the community that you would work with them, and you went so far as to make a commitment. I’d like to remind you of that commitment because you made a speech. You said, “We will make the investments in Atikokan to ensure there is no job loss here. And not only will we not eliminate jobs; my hope is that we will create jobs, high-paying, good jobs in the town of Atikokan.” I have to tell you, having been there just last week, that the people of Atikokan are very nervous. They’re waiting to hear from you about your plan and so far they’ve heard nothing. Minister, I’d like you to make good on your promise. When are you going to tell the people of Atikokan what your plan is all about?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Our plan is to close the Lakeview coal plant and to maintain the 90 full-time-equivalent jobs that are there. The Minister of Northern Development was there last week and reassured the community. I was there as well. As a result of this government’s policies on clean energy, more than \$3.5 billion is being invested in Ontario, including northern Ontario, for new jobs related to green energy. While you may be trapped in the past, relying on a carbon-based economy and the pollution that it generates, we’re moving forward. The people of Atikokan have had our assurance that that plant, when it’s closed, will be replaced with 90 new jobs.

The town’s tax base is seriously affected by this as well. That’s an undertaking we’ve given them that apparently you haven’t. I’ve met with the mayor; I’ve been to

Atikokan; the Premier has met with him; the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The plant is running now, and when that plant comes down, there will be 90 jobs to replace those jobs in a responsible and prudent way that protects the people of Atikokan from the loss of the coal plant.

**Mr. Miller:** The people of Atikokan want to know your plan. I met with the mayor and with business people and they want to know your plan. They’re nervous and they haven’t heard anything from you. I think it’s a reasonable thing to expect; 2007 isn’t very far away. I can tell you, having met with many mill operators in the north, that they’re nervous too. If you drive around the north, in every town the main feature is some large paper mill or large sawmill and the community depends on that. They’re nervous about your energy policies because right now those mills are just barely hanging on. They’ve been faced with the increase of the Canadian dollar, with the softwood lumber dispute, and now your energy policies are like the nail in the coffin for many of these mills. They’re just barely hanging on. They want to know how you’re going to ensure that they have a reasonable price for energy. Many of the mills—one of the mill managers they met—use 30% natural gas in their production, and when you switch coal-fired to natural gas, what do you think is going to happen to the price of natural gas? You’re going to drive it up, and you may force many of these mills out of business. Let us know your plan.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** You know, it’s interesting: We’ve met with everyone in the industry. I’ve been to all the big plants. We’re appointing an industrial cogeneration facilitator. What has John Tory done about this? Nothing. What did they do about cogeneration? Nothing. You were there for eight years. The problems of these plants didn’t just start. They’ve been going on for a long time. In fact, 14 plants closed under the NDP administration. During his leadership, John Tory never mentioned the northern forestry industry and what’s happening to it: what’s happening to it because of the value of the dollar; what’s happening to it because of a range of factors that are beyond the control of any government. We’ve done something they didn’t think to do: industrial cogeneration. We brought together the experts to help us help these plants to be competitive and successful in Ontario. The plan we’ve laid out undoes what his government and the members opposite did: undermine the safety and reliability and price effectiveness of electricity in this province. John Tory has no vision for electricity. He’s no leader. The leader who knows what he’s doing is Premier McGuinty, and this government is going to fix the mess that they left behind. It was you—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Order. You know that you’ve made some unparliamentary comment; I would ask you to get back to your seat and withdraw. Do the honourable thing.

1600

**Mr. Dunlop:** I withdraw that, Speaker. Can I get to petitions now?

**The Speaker:** I will state it now. You have made some unparliamentary comment. Would you mind withdrawing it?

**Mr. Dunlop:** I did withdraw it. Can I do my petition first?

**The Speaker:** You were just about at petitions, but you've run the clock to 4 o'clock. Pursuant to standing order 30(b), it being 4 o'clock, I'm now required to call—

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have consent, because of the number of statements we had today, to add 15 minutes to the clock, the usual amount of time for petitions.

**The Speaker:** I was just about to do the 30(b), and I understand there's unanimous consent to add 15 minutes in order for us to get petitions on. Is that OK? Do I have unanimous consent? Agreed.

## PETITIONS

### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I beg your indulgence to read a petition from my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Honourable Michael Bryant is minister responsible for democratic renewal; and

"Whereas the Honourable Michael Bryant, Attorney General of Ontario, is elected to safeguard our justice system on behalf of the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the ministry of our Attorney General may not be aware of the serious and important issues facing individuals involved in areas of the justice system even though the Attorney General's ministry is continually monitoring;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Honourable Michael Bryant, Attorney General, for his in-depth investigation of the Ontario judicial system and [to] make the public aware of his findings immediately."

I am pleased to support this on behalf of my constituent Albert Werry.

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I have a petition that's written to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I have to thank Debbie Bruce from Erin Mills in Mississauga for her support and help in submitting this petition.

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools;

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I put my name on this petition and hand it to Lindsay, our page.

### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I am pleased to sign my name to that and present it to Sean McConkey.

### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I keep getting petitions about the planned tunnel near St. Clair Avenue West. It reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; and

"Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge; and



"Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both east and west sides creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under the St. Clair Avenue West bridge, thus eliminating this eyesore with its high banks and blank walls. Instead, it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign this document.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign my name to that and give it to Alexandra.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition here signed by many members of the management and board of Credit Valley Hospital. It is a petition to ban smoking in public places in Ontario. Credit Valley Hospital itself will be smoke-free on all of its grounds as of this Thursday. I thank Wayne Fyffe, the hospital president, and some of the board members, especially

Cheryl Englander, Cindy Fleming, and my opponent in the last election, Nina Tangri, who has graciously signed the petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 16,000 Ontarians each year die of tobacco-related causes; and

"Whereas the inhalation of direct and second-hand tobacco smoke both lead to health hazards that can and do cause preventable death; and

"Whereas more than four out of every five Ontarians do not smoke, and this large majority desires that enclosed public places in Ontario be smoke-free at all times; and

"Whereas preventing the sale of tobacco products, especially to young people, and banning the use of tobacco products in public and gathering places of all types will lower the incidence of smoking among Ontarians and decrease preventable deaths;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Ontario Legislative Assembly enact Bill 164 and that the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care aggressively implement measures to restrict the sale and supply of tobacco to those under 25; that the display of tobacco products in retail settings be banned; that smoking be banned in enclosed public places or in workplaces and banned on or near the grounds of public and private schools, hospitals and day nurseries; that designated smoking areas or rooms in public places be banned; and that penalties for violations of smoking laws be substantially increased."

I agree completely with this petition, I've affixed my signature to it, and I'll ask Taylor to carry it.

#### MUNICIPAL PLANNING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I have a different petition, this time from Oro-Medonte.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in December 2001 and July 2002, Uccie Consolidated Holdings Inc. applied to the township of Oro-Medonte and the county of Simcoe (respectively) to amend their official plans to provide for an adult lifestyle community;

"Whereas the following studies were undertaken in support of the application: planning justification report; environmental analysis report; hydrogeological analysis ... ; fiscal impact analysis; market analysis; preliminary servicing report; and functional servicing report ... ;

"Whereas the township of Oro-Medonte approved to amend their official plan in October 2003 (official plan amendment number 18);

"Whereas the county of Simcoe approved to amend their official plan (official plan amendment number 2);

"Whereas on October 1, 2004, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing refused to approve county of Simcoe official plan amendment number 2 on the basis of what the petitioner believes to be incorrect information and inadequate analysis of supporting documentation;

"Whereas the approval of the adult lifestyle community would have the following positive impacts: de-

velopment of a strong community to provide housing alternatives and aging in place for seniors; provide community infrastructure in the form of recreational and social facilities, including a community centre, golf course, indoor swimming pool and recreational trails; respond to the site's environment sensitivities and protect and enhance natural heritage features; provide full municipal services not only to the proposed community but also to surrounding developments on private septic services; protect water quality and quantity entering Lake Simcoe; and provide an appropriate development design that incorporates the best principles of land use planning and environmental stewardship;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To call upon the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to inform the Ontario Municipal Board that the government of Ontario fully supports official plan amendment number 2 of the county of Simcoe."

I'm pleased to that sign my name to that and give it to Sean.

1610

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Southwestern Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Southwestern Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Southwestern Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Southwestern Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

This petition is signed by hundreds of persons—for example, from Blenheim, Kent Bridge, Cedar Springs—and I too have signed this petition.

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** This is a petition from 2,500 people who agree with those who want to save Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I have signed that, and I agree with that petition.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I have a similar petition signed by a number of people from the area who brought it to my attention.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I sign that petition and also have a family member in that institution.



## ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of a local organization in the Niagara region called NASK. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established province-wide standards to deal with anaphylactic shock in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylactic shock in the Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylactic shock is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 20, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 92, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to rise and debate on Bill 92, in my capacity as official opposition critic for municipal affairs and housing. This bill has had a number of days of debate and my friend from Brantford supports the bill, as do we. We're pleased to see this bill finally moving forward—if they have a good idea, we're glad to support it in the Legislature. In fact, Bill 92 is more or less legislating a memorandum of understanding that had previously existed, I think begun under the Mike Harris government, as I recall, when Chris Hodgson was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. So it had been a standing agreement between the ministry and AMO, acting on behalf of municipalities, that now has been brought forward in a legislative form.

It doesn't have any particular penalties, for example, if the letter of the law or spirit of the law is not followed, which is interesting. There are no penalties in there, because we have already spotted a significant number of breaches of the legislation, which I will get to momentarily. But there have been a disconcerting number of times

where the government has moved forward with various bills, regulations or policy decisions, failing to have first consulted municipalities, as they had claimed they would do under Bill 92, or, if they had consulted it wasn't genuine consultation. We saw any kind of feedback from municipalities summarily rejected by the government, by the minister of the day. So we certainly hope that we'll see better attention to Bill 92 by the Dalton McGuinty government now that it's moving through second reading than has been shown in the past year and any time since Dalton McGuinty and this cabinet were sworn in, in the fall of 2003.

1620

By way of background, Bill 92, officially called the Municipal Amendment Act, 2005, provides that the province shall consult with municipalities on matters of mutual interest "in accordance with a memorandum of understanding entered into between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario," AMO, as I mentioned moments ago. I know that AMO chair Roger Anderson, the municipal leaders he speaks for, and Pat Vanini at AMO have been pushing very much behind the scenes with the government, as well as us in opposition, to see this bill move forward. I'll tell you why they are bit impatient: It is because this bill was originally introduced June 8, 2004. So not quite a year, but about 11 months have now passed since first reading of this bill.

There was great fanfare in the Legislature; there was great fanfare at a municipal conference where the minister officially signed the document, I believe with the past chair, not Chair Anderson, if I recall the picture. At any rate, there was great fanfare at that time, but then it ran out of energy, I guess, and sort of fell on the farthest back of the back burners on the legislative agenda for the government, which is regrettable. There has been a reaction from municipalities to that. I'm very pleased that we, the members of the opposition, played a role here in bringing these concerns forward and, I believe, helping to motivate this bill to where it is today in the Legislature.

As I said at the outset, I do want to give a particular commendation to a Minister of Municipal Affairs under Mike Harris, Chris Hodgson, who had brought this forward as the MOU. Of course, Premier Mike Harris had brought this forward under his government, and now we'll see it as part of Bill 92 under the Dalton McGuinty government, which is a good thing. It is good to see this continuation of policy. We just hope that we'll see some actual action behind the bill to make sure that the paper is worth more than the words that are simply typed upon it.

Again, this bill was introduced June 8, 2004, in the House. At the time, it was trumpeted as a "new relationship with the municipalities." Well, in reality it was the continuation of the previously existing memorandum of understanding, but I guess at the time of introduction of bills there is that kind of hyperbole. It was trumpeted as a new relation with the municipalities, a big signing ceremony, a big announcement here in the Legislature, but then it disappeared. It was never called back for second reading until a week or two ago. In fact, my

understanding was that it was never brought forward by government during their negotiations among House leaders, for example, to have this bill brought forward for debate over the last 11 months or so.

In fact, when I review Hansard, there were five times, five occasions, when members of the opposition stood up and asked for unanimous consent that we move to debate on second reading of Bill 92. These things took place in the winter of this year, between February 21 and March 29. There may have been some before that, but those are the ones that I recall.

Certainly some other bills have been brought forward that I would not have given the same weight to as an important issue like Bill 92 to the municipalities. We certainly spent a great deal of time debating, for example, the Film Classification Act in this Legislature. I remember the special winter session that we were all called to attend, again with great fanfare about what an active agenda Dalton McGuinty was pursuing and these major pieces of legislation that had to be attended to at once. We got here, and I think the first couple of days of debate, the majority of those days, were spent debating film classification in the province of Ontario.

I don't know if that meets the priorities of the majority of our constituents across the province, which would probably be centred around health care, for example; a lot of concern about transportation and energy issues and certainly now, as we head to the budget, a lot of concern about fiscal issues, the state of the province's books, for example. It looks like we're heading to over a \$6-billion deficit this past year and who knows how big the Dalton McGuinty deficit will be in 2005-06. We will find that out May 11, I expect, or at least we'll have an estimate of it.

I guess I'm putting a bit of an asterisk beside that statement, because initially we were told that the deficit for 2004-05 was going to be about \$2.2 billion, and then, I think to the great credit of the work of the Provincial Auditor—and members of the opposition had also red-circled this—he caught the finance minister in an accounting trick and showed that the true deficit under Dalton McGuinty for 2004-05 was more like \$6 billion; it would be a more accurate figure than \$2.2 billion.

So to the public, the deficit tripled in Dalton McGuinty's first year in office. We'll see on May 11 what the next segment, the next increase, in the deficit is going to be, but I fear that it will be a substantial burden placed on taxpayers through overspending and a lack of revenue caused by the slowdown of the Ontario economy relative to previous years.

But as was I saying, back in February and early March, we brought forward a number of motions to call for Bill 92. We had debated the Film Classification Act and spent a lot of time debating an act with respect to pit bulls, but there was no time found for Bill 92 debate, an issue of significant importance to municipalities. After an 11-month period, finally we can stand to give second reading debate on this particular bill.

On February 21, it was actually me. This was the time that ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association

conference, was taking place. I called for unanimous consent that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario debate Bill 92 that afternoon, February 21; Tuesday afternoon, February 22; and Thursday afternoon, February 24; and that we would look for a second reading vote on Thursday, February 24. I thought this would be an important thing to do—as I said, we were talking about film classification—or at least maybe it would broker some sort of compromise so we could have some debate on Bill 92. Unfortunately, I did not receive unanimous consent on that motion.

The same day, my friend and colleague the member for Nepean–Carleton rose on a point of order, looking for unanimous consent that “instead of debating this, on behalf of Roger Anderson, the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario”—he's the chairman, but it's close—“we debate Bill 92 this afternoon because we were very interested and concerned about this bill too.” Speaker Curling called for unanimous consent, but it was not given.

There were some subsequent meetings of the House leaders, and again the bill was not brought forward on the order paper.

On March 9, I had the opportunity to rise in the House again, and I asked for unanimous consent of the House concerning Bill 92, which is the Municipal Amendment Act, 2005, dealing with the MOU between the province and municipalities. I went on to say at the time, March 9:

“Given that this bill was introduced on June 8 and has not been called, in almost a year, for even one hour of second reading debate, I move the following motion:

“That, after question period today, the House immediately move to second reading debate on March 9, followed by immediate debate on March 29....”

The Speaker asked for unanimous consent, but unfortunately, that was not received on the bill at that particular time.

John Baird, the member for Nepean–Carleton, who, at the time was our House leader, rose on March 9 and again asked for unanimous consent that Bill 92, the AMO memorandum of understanding act, be called for debate that afternoon. The Speaker again called for unanimous consent, which was defeated.

Similarly, points of order were brought forward on March 29 by me and Mr. Baird, discussing the need to enter into debate on Bill 92, but sadly, we were not able to achieve that.

I know there was a great deal of frustration on the part of municipalities. The AMO chair and the executive director, among others in the AMO leadership, I'm sure, put great pressure on the government. I'm pleased that that did occur so that now we can in fact move to debate on Bill 92, which has happened in the last week or so. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to enter into that debate today.

Obviously, a very important principle that we embraced under the Mike Harris government, by bringing forward the MOU in the first place, was a responsibility to work closely with municipalities on programs of



shared delivery, shared concern. If the province were making a change in policy, for example, that impacted on municipal budgets where they were required to deliver it, it made sense that we should consult with municipalities and take their best advice in bringing the program forward. As I mentioned, that was the MOU from a couple of years ago, and now it's part of this bill.

What is unfortunate, in return, is a number of examples, which I will address shortly, where the government has not followed the letter of the law, has not followed the spirit of the law, and in fact has ignored Bill 92 altogether.

Some conspiracy theorists may say that they delayed bringing Bill 92 forward because they had a plan to change the municipal-provincial relationship significantly in the negative for municipalities and therefore did not want to be bound by Bill 92. For example, they have significantly cut transfers to the municipal partners in their ongoing funding by some \$47 million. I suppose that if they had run the numbers by municipalities, there's no way the municipalities would have given this their support when they saw some significant impacts on areas like Chatham-Kent, Brantford, right across eastern Ontario, and of course my own area in Niagara. Conspiracy theorists might say that the reason the government did not bring this bill forward for debate and a vote was because they had a plan to cut funding to municipalities, contrary to Dalton McGuinty's campaign promises, and to try to get away with that and not be bound by Bill 92.

I usually don't put much carriage into theories of conspiracy theorists, conspiracy mongers, and I suspect that may not be accurate. Whether Bill 92 was passed or not, I suspect the government still would have gone about its plans to cut funding to their municipal partners, for example.

**1630**

We know there are no penalties in this bill, so if the minister cavalierly cut programs, cut funding for municipalities, there really are no consequences, other than that he's breaking the promise of the bill, and we certainly know that the Premier and his cabinet have a propensity for breaking their promises. They would say one thing before the campaign and something entirely different while in office. There are some 40 examples of this, which I won't rhyme off as part of my discussion today, that show that if they have that kind of disregard for their campaign platform and the voters who endorsed that campaign platform, it's not surprising that they would have the same disregard for municipal partners and the same disregard for Bill 92, which is before the Legislature today.

Let me give one early example. This was before Bill 92 was introduced, so it's not a violation of Bill 92, except retroactively. Although in a number of pieces of legislation, like the greenbelt and like the Adams mine legislation, for example, the government has brought forward retroactive clauses in their bills, there are no retroactive clauses in Bill 92. Bill 92 has no power to go

after the government for a promise they broke before Bill 92 is passed. While it exists in some aspects of Liberal legislation, it does not exist in Bill 92. But if it did, if this were amended to have a retroactive clause, one of the items that would be caught up—one of the very first broken promises of the Dalton McGuinty government and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was the famous McGuinty flip-flop on the de-amalgamation of Kawartha Lakes.

Before the election, Dalton McGuinty, really in a crass attempt to try to cater to votes, as opposed to any strongly held policy position, committed to honouring the results of a referendum in Kawartha Lakes concerning amalgamation or de-amalgamation.

Here are some of the quotes from the Lindsay Daily Post: Lynn Boldt said, "Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty has twice made a similar commitment with respect to de-amalgamation to Kawartha Lakes, once in writing and reconfirmed later at the beginning of Jason Ward's local Liberal candidacy."

Jason Ward, of course, the Liberal candidate at the time, was defeated by Laurie Scott, our hard-working and excellent colleague from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock. When Jason Ward launched his Liberal candidacy, Dalton McGuinty said he would move forward with de-amalgamation commitments if that was the result of the referendum.

Here is something from Jason Ward, the Haliburton-Victoria-Brock Liberal candidate, in the Lindsay Daily Post, March 18, 2003. Mr. Ward said, "Dalton McGuinty and my party have committed to lending provincial assistance to the city to de-amalgamate if that is what is decided. We can't commit to an exact figure because there are no firm costs that have been decided on for de-amalgamation."

So he gave himself some political wiggle room in terms of the cost, but Mr. Ward, and I suspect Mr. McGuinty, from what I read in the Lindsay Daily Post, did not give themselves any wriggle room. They were very clear that they would honour a de-amalgamation commitment if that's the way Kawartha Lakes voted.

I think most members of the assembly know, because we have talked about this in debate before, that Kawartha Lakes did vote to de-amalgamate in the referendum. What happened after the election? We know what the position of Dalton McGuinty and his Minister of Municipal Affairs was before the election. After the election, McGuinty and Minister Gerretsen stated that they would not support the results of the municipal referendum calling for the de-amalgamation of the city of Kawartha Lakes. That referendum was held in conjunction with the 2003 municipal election.

I won't get into too many more quotes on that particular issue. There are a number of further quotes, but I think the point has been made by the use of those quotes, that Dalton McGuinty promised that he would follow the referendum results with respect to Kawartha Lakes. His candidate at the time, Mr. Ward, made the same commitment. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has a role in

this as well. Shortly after the election, as a harbinger of things to come, Minister Gerretsen snuck into the community at night, announced that they were breaking the promise—that they would not de-amalgamate—and then snuck back out of the community. I think that's a pretty accurate description, from what I've heard from my colleague and what I've read in the papers. In fact, a local businessman had a rather inflammatory sign up about Dalton McGuinty for some time after the minister had come up and announced the broken promise.

Bill 92, for example, if it had been passed, probably would have had something to say about the broken promise and the obvious lack of consultation with the municipality. My understanding is that the minister did not go in there and speak with the municipality, who then told him that to break his promise—it was a promise broken out of habit by Premier McGuinty and his cabinet. So while they bring Bill 92 forward on one hand, their actions, in terms of lack of consultation with individuals and municipal leaders, belie that. It does the exact opposite.

The hardworking staff in the municipal affairs critic's office have put together the top 10 breaches of Bill 92. If Bill 92 had passed—if Bill 92 had, for argument's sake, a fine of \$100 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for each of these occasions, that would be a \$1,000 fine. That's probably a lower number than the bill would have in it, but it's for the sake of demonstration. While they talk a good game on Bill 92 in their discussions in the House, the reality is that they are not consulting with the municipalities; or if they do, they regularly ignore the feedback they have received.

Number one on the top 10, from a chronological point of view, was the Kawartha Lakes broken promise: ignoring the work of local municipal leaders and breaking a campaign promise. Number two is—I talked about this a bit earlier—the much-vaunted pit bull legislation. I have a lot of constituents who would use this line: While they regret that they have to wait a year or two years to have hip or knee replacement surgery, or to await cancer treatment for far too long on a waiting list, they are so relieved that on their way to the hospital they won't be attacked by a pit bull in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario—facetious, but the point constituents are making is that there seems to be a strange set of priorities. Instead of addressing the real needs of families across the province by lowering waiting lists and getting the needed surgeries, tests, MRIs or CT machines, a great deal of energy was spent by the government in going after one particular breed of animal.

The Attorney General has made a habit of this; in fact, I think he has also—my colleague will correct me if I'm wrong—assigned some significant resources to the Attorney General's office to pursue whether they could take the Stanley Cup away from the Hockey Hall of Fame or the NHL, the trustees of the NHL; I'm not sure who the right owner is. Why, when there are important issues like health care and crime to be addressed, would the Attorney General dedicate resources to the Stanley

Cup? It causes a great deal of puzzlement in taxpayers across the province.

In this pit bull bill, I gather that it's municipalities that will be forced to administer the legislation. Probably local bylaw enforcement officers, local animal control officers and local police forces would be involved. A significant number of municipalities across the province have their own municipal police force, or others will pay through the OPP, so it's on the municipal tab. I expect they'll be required to enact the pit bull legislation; I wouldn't think this is all a publicity stunt by the Attorney General. He has no intention of enforcing the legislation. I don't think the Attorney General would do that. So I presume it's going to be administered by the municipalities, to measure the length of a dog's ear or how long his tail is or the length of his hair—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Or just to identify one. That's a big problem for the minister.

1640

**Mr. Hudak:** The minister hasn't really given a very good example in terms of how to identify a pit bull in the first place. Certainly it's not much of a course for police officers and animal control officers to address what a pit bull looks like. Presumably, based on the Attorney General's example, they'll have to spend time determining by the looks of the animal whether it's a pit bull or not, and that is a cost on municipalities.

I don't think there is any consultation with municipalities on the enforcement of this act. We certainly have not seen it. I bet you that municipalities in turn would say, "OK, if you want us to enforce the pit bull legislation, then give us the resources to do so." From what we've seen from municipal grant programs, that is not included at all. I've not seen the Attorney General assign any funds for municipalities. I can only say, with the lack of any knowledge to the contrary—I haven't heard it in debate—that the pit bull legislation is another example of a breach of Bill 92. It has a municipal enforcement component, and there has been no consultation and no support for municipalities for the pit bull legislation.

Another famed broken promise was the cancellation of the municipal drainage program. It certainly caused a great deal of concern and anger for rural municipalities and the agricultural community when that program was cancelled. From what I understand, there wasn't any real consultation with the municipalities, as Bill 92 would have you believe, on this cancellation of the drainage program. They more or less went ahead and did it. I think they might have told a municipal councillor that they were going to do it, but there was no basis for it, no consultation involved and certainly no advice.

Eventually, because of the pressure we saw from municipalities and from some of our hardworking members of the opposition, like Ernie Hardeman from Oxford, and the member from Simcoe North, helping me with my discourse this afternoon, because of hardworking members like that and the pressure at ROMA, the government in turn changed their mind and have, if I understand it correctly, restored funding for the municipal drainage



program. We're glad they did that, but if they had consulted with municipalities, as Bill 92 instructs them to do, they probably would not have made that mistake in the first place, because municipal partners would have said, "That's crazy." That was a crazy decision. It was a bad decision. It's been reinstated, in large part due to municipal pressure, but that whole controversy and embarrassment to the government would have been avoided if they had followed Bill 92 and consulted municipalities in detail about the importance of the municipal drainage program, particularly, obviously, to our smallest municipalities.

The local health integration networks: We've had the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Attorney General all in breach of this legislation, and now it was the Minister of Health's turn, when he brought forward his local health integration networks. For those who aren't aware, this is a new level of bureaucracy that would be imposed between the Ministry of Health and local service providers. I can only imagine how many millions of dollars this is going to cost. I know what they're looking at for their employees—the CEO, or whatever the proper title is, of each LHIN. I saw an advertisement in the paper for I think between \$200,000 to \$250,000 each, a significant investment in administration, and not in front-line services to doctors or nurses or chiropractors, for example, to deliver services to patients. A new bureaucracy, an expensive bureaucracy and an unwanted bureaucracy was brought forward by the Minister of Health.

I would suspect that across the province, and I know in my area, there has been a great deal of criticism by municipal leaders about these new LHINs in their form, but also about the bizarre maps that have been drawn up, where municipalities have been put into these huge areas or into areas that they don't have much of a relationship with. We have a supersized LHIN in the Niagara Peninsula that lumps Niagara in with Hamilton, Brantford, Haldimand, Norfolk and Brant. That's a massive area. What people in Niagara and municipal leaders rightly fear is that the Niagara focus will be lost under the LHIN, and issues of importance to us—like a new cancer centre in St. Catharines, recruiting more doctors to rural Ontario—will be lost in this massive, supersized LHIN.

I'm going to wager—and if I'm wrong I'll admit I'm wrong—that the Minister of Health did not sit down with municipal leaders to work out these boundaries. I talked about a fine earlier on. This would be too harsh, but by way of example, if there were a jail sentence for violations of Bill 92, I think half the cabinet would be locked up. That might be a good thing for Ontario. It certainly would hold back the rapid increases in funding and high taxes. I'm using it as an illustrative point; I don't mean for them to be locked up. Some would argue that that might be a good thing because it would stop the damage happening to the province. But if Bill 92 had, by way of argument, a jail sentence attached to it, half the cabinet would be locked up. I've already gone through four or five who have violated Bill 92.

The LHINs are a violation of Bill 92, I would expect, because I don't believe there was any consultation with municipal leaders. Municipal leaders in my area, and I suspect in others, have strongly objected to the boundaries of the LHINs and the necessity of them as a new level of bureaucracy. They are also upset about the DHCs being blown up. So you had a local group planning in Niagara or Brant or Simcoe that's been blown up and replaced by a faceless bureaucracy that has no relationship with the community. Besides that, it is very far behind schedule.

The greenbelt legislation, another salient example: Minister Gerretsen was bound for leather to ram that legislation through before Christmas in 2004. I think some people have forgotten about this. We asked him repeatedly in the House and called upon him to go out to consultations to make sure they had the bill right. The minister and the Premier said they would not do that. It was only through relentless pressure by the opposition and some tough, hardball negotiations by our then House leader, Mr. Baird, with the support of our leader, John Tory, that we were successful in getting committee hearings in the new year.

I know for a fact that municipal leaders across the greenbelt were extremely upset with the bill being rammed through the Legislature potentially before Christmas. I bet the timing of the greenbelt legislation alone had not gone through any kind of municipal consultation process. If it had, the responses would have been 100% contrary. So I have got to believe that the Minister of Municipal Affairs did not check with the greenbelt municipalities surrounding timing of the greenbelt legislation or his initial attempt to ram it through before Christmas.

Another example on the greenbelt theme, number six on our list of Bill 92 violations, was the extensive, widespread and serious mapping problems with the greenbelt map. I believe that if they had taken a more responsible and more timely approach to the municipalities, a lot of these items could have been ironed out, because municipalities know their boundaries. Municipalities know if there is an important natural feature in their jurisdiction; they know which properties have been set aside for development, which ones have not; and, I would argue, would probably know where the strength of the agriculture community is within their municipal boundaries. But we had all kinds of bizarre mapping areas. We had marshes—the Beverly marsh was cut in half in the greenbelt map. The Holland Marsh, the world-famous Holland Marsh, in the original draft map was cut in half. We had cemeteries and graveyards included in the greenbelt area, and we had boundaries that had been set aside under municipal official plans that were already serviced included in the greenbelt. Some pristine areas, like Boyd Conservation Area, for example, or Pleasantview in Dundas, were excluded from the greenbelt, that municipal partners would have said should be included in the greenbelt legislation.

I've got to believe, and I think I stand on pretty solid ground, that the Minister of Municipal Affairs rushed out

the greenbelt legislation, didn't consult with the stakeholders, threw it out there and drew out the draft map on the back of a napkin because he was retreating from his broken promise on stopping housing on the Oak Ridges moraine. In order to try to make up for that clear and distinct broken promise, they rushed the greenbelt out there and, as a result, didn't thoroughly think it through, and had a number of problems with the mapping exercise.

Number seven: The government insists that they listened to duly elected councils when they made the final greenbelt map decisions, but there seem to be some municipal councils that are more equal than others, I guess, if they truly consulted. Grimsby is still very upset with some of the decisions made on the greenbelt map in their area. Pretty well every week there's a story in the paper about a discussion at local council that is upset that their good advice was ignored by the minister. We had a lot of very strong language sent by the mayor of Vaughan, who said that if the minister believed that official plans should be respected, then why was the Vaughan municipal plan rejected so summarily by the minister? Pickering is another issue. I know my colleague from Pickering is here. He'll know there is some upset in the Pickering council. So the government had a bit of a double standard, where it respected some municipalities but ignored others. I suspect it's because they didn't follow through with the principles of Bill 92. If they had, I believe a lot of these issues would have been ironed out beforehand.

Number eight: Bill 186, currently before us—I know Mayor Fennell of Brampton and Mayor Morrison of Caledon are very upset with this legislation, the lack of clarity, the lack of consistency, and the fact that the solution in the bill was one that had not even been debated, not for a day, not for an hour, not even for a minute, before Peel regional council. It was pulled out of the air, I guess, by the Minister of Municipal Affairs or one of the Premier's advisers, to try to solve the issue that they had let burn in Peel, and it was met with great dissatisfaction by the majority of municipal councillors in that area.

1650

They also ignored their facilitator's recommendations. The esteemed Justice Adams did a facilitation report on this, spoke with the interested municipal parties and brought forward a document. The Premier sat on it for months and months and then basically crumpled it up and tossed it into the garbage can. I don't know if it hit the rim or if it swished, but it went in the garbage can.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Hudak:** Slam dunk, my colleague across the floor says.

What is regrettable is that the municipal advice was ignored. If you see the responses from the mayor of Brampton and the mayor of Caledon to those municipal councillors, to say they're extremely upset with the decisions of Dalton McGuinty, the broken promises and the fact that the solution was never brought before them but imposed upon them—they would say that they

shattered Bill 92, that they broke it in spades with Bill 186.

Number nine: the 2004 CRF reconciliation. I think my colleagues in the House are quite aware of the CRF program; the municipal partners certainly are. The community reinvestment fund would be two envelopes. At the beginning of the year, municipalities would get a certain envelope estimating the cost of delivery of social services, as part of the realignment of services in the late 1990s, and then, at the end of the year, there would be a second CRF envelope called the reconciliation fund. These funds would be used to calculate the difference between what the programs actually cost and how much money the municipality received, and try to make up the difference.

That had been the case since 1998. Then Minister Gerretsen went down to the ROMA convention just a few weeks ago and gave a very puzzling announcement that—bottom line—basically the province was going to renege on its 2004 reconciliation payments. It had been done consistently from 1998 until 2004, and now they announced they had stopped doing the 2004 reconciliation. There was outrage again by municipal partners. There was no consultation on that. I can't believe it. The minister and his colleagues were booed. They were jeered at ROMA. Those of us who were there saw that.

Then, thankfully, because of municipal pressure and I think some questions here in the Legislature, they backed down and said they would make good on their bills. Dalton McGuinty ran down there and waved a white flag within 24 hours. I'm pleased that he did, I'm pleased that he surrendered, because he was trying to get off the hook for bills that were owed, but the fact that the minister in the first place tried to wriggle off the hook is another clear breach of Bill 92.

Number 10 on our list is a new Ontario municipal partnership fund program. Now, I do believe there was discussion on a type of program, how to address the shortcomings of CRF and try to give municipalities a better framework to move forward. But I don't believe the actual numbers, the actual impact on municipalities was discussed with the municipalities themselves. Certainly, when you look at the change in the base funding for this new program and the CRF funds they had received from those two envelopes, some \$47 million less is going to municipalities. I know areas like Peterborough, Brant, Niagara, Chatham-Kent and eastern Ontario have had significant reductions in their funding for municipal programs. So I can't believe that the Ontario municipal partnership program and the numbers that were attached to it were run by the municipalities to begin with. I will just give you a couple of examples.

Tim Rigby, the mayor of St Catharines, said, "Over a period of three years we'll be whittled down to nothing. It's something we're certainly going to have discussions about." So that's a significant hit, \$2.9 million.

Ted Salci, the mayor of Niagara Falls—an excellent quote—"We've got the provincial government complaining of the \$23-billion gap from the federal government.



And I can't get \$2.1 million. We're complaining about the same things." The mayor is referring to the reduction in funds to the city of Niagara Falls.

The treasurer of Grey Highlands, Alan Selby, said, "In other words we will have to raise our tax rates by 25% and/or make expense cuts ... over the next four years."

Brantford mayor Mike Hancock: "I feel betrayed. I really thought that they were listening to us.... It took us two weeks to figure out how bad it was.... It makes us extremely vulnerable to extra costs."

They go on and on across the province.

Number 10 on the list is a very serious criticism and breach of Bill 92: that so many municipalities now are taking it on the chin, with significant new costs to cover with reduced funding from the province of Ontario, contrary to what Dalton McGuinty promised.

While we're pleased to stand here and support Bill 92 and have enjoyed the debate on Bill 92, we have to raise the important and accurate criticism that, at least in these 10 areas—and that's what I and the hard-working people upstairs in room 347 alone have come up with: 10 breaches of Bill 92 already by the Dalton McGuinty government. That's certainly not as many as their 40-something broken promises, but it's an awfully ominous start to seeing how they will follow the law of Bill 92.

We look forward to the vote, but I do hope that we will see an improvement in behaviour by the cabinet and the Dalton McGuinty government to actually follow Bill 92, instead of routinely breaching this contract with municipalities.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Just with respect to the issues that the member has raised, I had a chance to speak to this bill, and I pointed out at the time—and I want to reinforce it again—that it's nice the government has got some kind of agreement with AMO to deal with some issues, but the government has been sadly lacking in any kind of discussion with small municipalities in northern Ontario, particularly those that are organized under district social service administration boards. I can tell you that the district administration boards have huge issues with this government, particularly with respect to ambulance service, which, as you can well appreciate, is a critical issue in most parts of the province and particularly critical in our part of the province, where people have to travel long distances to access medical care.

We've got the Kenora District Services Board, which earlier in April actually wrote to the Premier and said, very clearly, "Why don't you just take ambulance services, because we can't afford to operate it any more."

In my own community, the Manitoulin-Sudbury district social services board is owed about \$1.2 million because of issues involving cross-border delivery of ambulance services. That hasn't been resolved yet. Each of the municipalities in question had a significant hit on their local levy to pay for ambulance services this year, which led to a look at program cuts and a hue and cry from the many municipalities that are being serviced.

We've got a problem with homes for the aged in the Algoma district services board, and that issue hasn't been resolved. They've got outstanding issues with respect to ambulance services as well.

The DSSABs have been waiting for this government to consult with them, as Minister Papatello said they would, because she is the lead minister responsible for DSSABs. They've been waiting for months—no consultation; nothing; silence. Meanwhile, the problems of delivery of service continue to grow. How come the government's not talking to these people?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** This is a very, very insignificant bill. There's one clause in the bill. Many of us are questioning why this bill was necessary at all. I would have rather debated Bill 186 today—that's the restructuring of the Peel regional council—because that has more impact than anything else. I hope that members are out on the front lawn tomorrow when the buses pull up from Brampton and Caledon for the debate tomorrow afternoon. The people of Brampton, I tell you, are not very pleased about the co-operation of this government with their municipality.

This government tries to portray itself as working with municipalities. What they did with Brampton and Peel was to send a facilitator in—George Adams, a very renowned judge—to work out a deal with the town of Caledon, the city of Brampton and the city of Mississauga. Judge Adams came up with a solution, but what the government did was put into effect another solution—the solution proposed by one of the parties, by the mayor of Mississauga. This government talks about working with various municipalities, but the proof is in the pudding with regard to the whole restructuring of Peel regional council.

I just want to say to all members, be prepared for tomorrow. We look forward to seeing you all out on the front lawn to meet the buses from Brampton. All the councillors and, I believe, the mayor of Caledon and the mayor of Brampton are going to be there. So I look forward to tomorrow afternoon, when we hear some more about the co-operation of this government with municipalities.

1700

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I'm glad to have the opportunity to comment on the member from Erie-Lincoln's rating of the 10 top issues that the government has not consulted on.

I've just returned from six days in northern Ontario—3,700 kilometres in 44 hours in the car visiting with people all around the north. I can tell you that the north feels neglected by this government and has some really serious problems. When you get into the north, you find out that this government has not consulted with northern communities in terms of investment for those communities. If you look at the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund, the joint federal-provincial program that has been recently announced, what do you find in northern Ontario? You find that most of the north has

been neglected, even where there are very serious cases where municipalities need help.

Look at Rainy River, where they have a sewage system that has a caution on it from the Ministry of the Environment. They can't build another house in Rainy River. If ever there was a project that should be getting investment from higher levels of government, it's that project. All the municipalities around Rainy River support them in their bid to get funding assistance from the provincial government. Their project was turned down by the provincial government.

Iroquois Falls's water system is in desperate need of assistance. They had a fire there recently. The fire truck pulls up, hooks up to the hydrant, and all they got out of the pipes was rust, which plugged up the fire truck. The garage burned to the ground as the firemen stood there because they couldn't get water. They had a COMRIF application before this government to improve their water system. Guess what? It was turned down by this government.

Smooth Rock Falls is another one that was turned down. This government thinks that the north ends at North Bay, because that's about as far north as the COMRIF applications made it. I think there were two in the northwest that I'm aware of, Ear Falls and Kenora, that got approved, and that's about it. There are many more examples that were well illustrated by the member from Erie-Lincoln on the lack of consultation by this government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Wonderful speech.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Erie-Lincoln, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Hudak:** To Timmins-James Bay, you might end up in my campaign literature, so watch out. It would win me a few votes in the north anyway.

I thank my colleagues for their comments. To Lanark-Carleton, he is right. One issue that I had spoken about, Bill 186, is a clear breach of Bill 92; right? I'll say to my friend from Peterborough, if there was a jail sentence or a fine, then the minister responsible for Bill 186 would be behind bars or paying that fine—a clear breach of what Bill 92 speaks to.

I know that Mayor Fennell will be here tomorrow and bringing all kinds of concerned citizens and municipal leaders from Brampton. They'll be asking, among other things, for the minister to follow through on Bill 92 and change Bill 186 to reflect what was part of the consultations. I'm not holding out hope.

I will hold out hope that a couple of the Brampton members will actually vote against this. I know that Brampton Centre has said as much, and I hope the other two Brampton members will follow the votes of their constituents and have the courage to stand in this place and vote against Dalton McGuinty and the government. I hope that's the case. I expect that to be the case. I look forward to seeing those three members at least rise

against it. I hope, with the quality of our debate in the Legislature and the passion that they'll hear from the people of Brampton tomorrow, that maybe other members, not necessarily from Peel region, will also vote against Bill 186.

Now that we're through the Bill 92 debate at second reading—I think I may be the last speaker on Bill 92—we hope that it will be passed expeditiously. We do regret that it took so long to get to this position, considering that it was introduced for first reading as far back as June 2004, but I think municipalities need the protection. They have seen the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the health minister and the Attorney General several times break Bill 92, so I expect that municipalities are saying that they hope this bill will be passed soon so they can be protected from further broken promises or lack of consultation by the McGuinty government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? Is there any other member who wishes to participate in the debate?

If not, Mr. Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 92. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed? I heard a no.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I seek approval to have the bill referred to the committee on general government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** So referred.

## ADOPTION INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES ADOPTIONS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 26, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 183, An Act respecting the disclosure of information and records to adopted persons and birth parents / *Projet de loi 183, Loi traitant de la divulgation de renseignements et de dossiers aux personnes adoptées et à leurs pères ou mères de sang.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 183. I have to say to you, just observing the government benches with regard to the handling of the previous bill that was being debated here, it's disconcerting, as I am sure you all appreciate, that the government didn't know what to do with this bill. We had a voice vote, the whip didn't know whether it should go to committee; the Minister of Agriculture rose to his feet and referred the bill to the committee on general government. Now he's probably in trouble with his House leader, but it's only an indication of how this government does its business.



Here we are debating Bill 183, which is another example of a piece of legislation that shouldn't even be before the House in its current form. The reason I say that is beginning even with the explanatory note there are inaccuracies here, and I have never seen political spin in the context of a piece of legislation. I'll read it into the record. The second paragraph of the explanatory note reads as follows: "Currently, the Vital Statistics Act does not permit adopted persons to obtain information from the Registrar General concerning their birth parents. Nor does it permit a birth parent of an adopted person to obtain information from the Registrar General about the adopted person." That's absolutely inaccurate, because under the current system information is, in fact, available—available with consent, yes, but there are some in this province who happen to believe that is appropriate. I'm speaking to this legislation today because I believe that the voice of many Ontarians deserves to be heard in this place in debate concerning this bill.

I want to also, for purposes of ensuring that people don't interpret my remarks as somehow being disconnected from the subject, for the record state that I have an adopted son. He was adopted at birth. My wife is adopted. Her three siblings were all adopted. So the issue of adoption is not foreign to our family; it's something we understand very well.

1710

My son knows he is adopted. There was never any sense of holding that from him. My wife went through the process of the current system, which allows for an adopted child to register. It also allows for the birth mother to register. The current system provides that if in fact there is agreement, there is a process which involves counselling. It takes, appropriately, a certain period of time to ensure that those individuals who have registered to make that contact with their child or the birth mother do so having fully considered the implications, that there are the appropriate measures taken to provide the individuals with information about what to expect, what some of the consequences might be.

I am opposed to this legislation in its current form and I will be voting against it. I look forward to this legislation going to committee. I trust that during those committee hearings we will, as legislators, listen very carefully to the representations made by people from across this province who have as an objective not to withhold information, who want not for anyone to be denied knowledge about their background or about their health records, or to deny the opportunity to become reconnected and to make that important contact with either their child given up for adoption or with their birth parents, but people who I believe deserve to be heard by legislators regarding their concerns: concerns about their personal circumstances, their concerns with regard to this legislation that does retroactively something they would never have ever imagined could happen. That is, records that were sealed—and they entered into the adoption process with the full understanding and knowledge that that information would be sealed—this Legislature now

is taking the initiative and is opening those records without any knowledge, without any consent being required. I believe that's wrong.

There is an issue of privacy here that I believe has to be respected, should be respected. I draw your attention to a piece of this legislation. The very fact that it's here speaks volumes. Section 30 reads as follows:

"30. Section 65 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is amended by adding the following subsection:

"Information relating to adoptions

"(8) This act does not apply with respect to information and records that are unsealed by virtue of section 48.1 or 48.2 of the Vital Statistics Act or notices and information registered under section 48.3 of that act."

With this legislation, we're essentially saying that we're going to reach into the protection of privacy act and we're going to ensure that individuals across this province who entered into the adoption agreements don't have the protection that every other citizen in this province has under the protection of privacy act. I believe that's wrong.

I want to read into the record a letter that I received from a constituent. I'm going to read it in its entirety, because I believe it says better than I could what hundreds and thousands of families across this province are feeling today. There are many other hundreds of thousands of individuals in this province who would feel what is being expressed by my constituent if they knew that this debate was taking place. Here's the concern: There are many people who have entered into adoption agreements over the last number of years in this province who have no idea that this legislation is being debated today. They will have no idea, once second and third reading is given, that this legislation was debated and has gone into law and that their privacy will no longer be respected.

It's one thing for this Legislature to pass legislation that comes into effect on a go-forward basis for the future; it's something else when we reach back retroactively through legislation, undo something that has been in place and take away the very provisions that were in place when people acted upon them. The principle of retroactivity in law-making is a very important one, and once again this government is bringing forward legislation—as they've done with other legislation since they have been the government—that ignores this issue of retroactivity and its implications.

I want to read this letter into the record.

"Dear Mr. Klees,

"I am writing as a responsible parent and husband living my life with my family and until recently, very contentedly in your riding. Sir, for the very first time in my life, I am afraid. I am afraid of the government of Ontario's announced intention to abrogate the province's long-standing adoption law, a law that guaranteed the privacy of both the adopted child and adoptive parents from those who, at a time of their choosing, might seek to interject themselves into the private social dynamic of the adopted child and their nuclear 'life' family.

"For reasons of privacy and discretion, I choose, as I am sure countless others would also choose, to withhold my name. But I know you, sir, and ironically, I also know the Premier and his family and they know ours. But all they know is that we have tried to live our lives honourably and that we attend church, pay our taxes, volunteer and vote. We also take care to mind our own affairs and to never visit our attitudes and cultural norms on others.

"We are a tolerant, dutiful and hopefully caring family, but sir, we do have a distinction from other families in our circle. We are all adoptees: both generations. Our children have never been told that they are adopted, and my wife and I, being only children, have never told our friends, business and professional associates or neighbours.

"We have enjoyed the anonymity our silence and right to privacy has afforded us and our children. We were never subjected to the systemic prejudices the adopted suffer in humiliating silence almost every day. When we did poorly in school, no teacher ever raised their eyebrow in that knowingly condescending fashion and asked, 'Oh, would Johnny be adopted?' When our parents died, we were not singled out by the *Toronto Star* as 'the adopted children of.' We were instead listed as 'the loving children of.'

"We were never actually told we were adopted ourselves until our parents passed away, and by that time we had become the sum collective of their beings and were content to be so. Our children have been raised as our own, as in fact we were, and they are the inheritors of all that our parents once were and loved and all that my wife and I hold to be dear.

1720

"My wife and I discovered very little about the circumstances surrounding our birth. Both she and I thank God that our knowledge of such events and people are remote and intangible. For our children, however, the horrifying background and circumstances surrounding their earliest circumstances should never see the light of day. I remember the judges in the adoption courts assuring my wife and I that these haunting shadows would never be visited upon them. Now all of this is in doubt and my family is threatened by its own government.

"Mr. Klees, there is much I have left out. Cryptic references aren't exactly the kind of documentation you are probably looking for in your defence of our family's privacy. I do, however, implore you to speak to the other members of the Legislature, to halt this attack on the thousands of defenceless families in Ontario who have adopted and been adopted with the clear understanding that our records were to be permanently sealed and that we were free to lead our lives (like everyone else) within the context of the lives we had actually lived, not the denial-laced pseudo-lives this legislation would lay at our door.

"Mr. Klees, we and the thousands of voiceless and defenceless adoptees and adoptive parents need the Legislature to amend this bill and to take out the retroactive aspects of the disclosure provisions.

"I ask you and your colleagues to change the nature and content of this proposed bill.

"On behalf of my wife and family, thank you for your interest and compassion in this matter. I know you know of what I speak."

I'm going to pass this on to the page, if you would come forward, please, because I want to ensure that that letter is reflected in the Hansard record of this debate.

I want to make it clear that I am not opposed to legislation that would take away the bureaucratic hurdles that often are in place unintentionally but so develop. If there are more efficient ways that we can find to ensure that we can deal with access to information, whether that be medical or otherwise, if there are ways that this Legislature can find to ensure, administratively, that we achieve the objective of ensuring a reunification with as little bureaucratic interference as possible, I'm for that and I will support that.

I want to make it clear again that what I object to strenuously—and every member of this Legislature who takes their responsibilities as a lawmaker should join with me in that objection—is the retroactivity contained in this legislation. You know that there are other jurisdictions in this country, other provinces, that have legislation that does not go as far as this legislation before us, that does not contain the retroactive aspects of this legislation that I and so many others in this province find offensive.

I will participate with my colleagues in the committee hearings. We will have those discussions.

I encourage people across this province to contact their MPP, to participate in this important discussion, because it is important.

I ask, as we continue this debate, that each legislator ask themselves this question: Am I imposing, through the retroactivity provisions of this bill, hardship on Ontario families unnecessarily? That is not the purpose of this Legislature. I look forward to this bill being changed through amendment to ensure that we address this issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? There being none, do any other members wish to participate in the debate?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** I want to associate myself with many of the remarks that Mr. Klees put forward with regard to this legislation, Bill 183. As you know, we've had several private members' pieces of legislation which have attempted in the past to do some of the same things as this piece of legislation does. But this is the first time that a government has introduced a bill, and therefore I feel that the debate on this particular bill will be more interesting and more inclusive of more people in Ontario than previous legislation.

One of the objections I have to having second reading debate at this time is that this bill was only introduced on March 29 of this year. That's approximately one month ago. My view of a piece of legislation like this is that it needs some time to gestate—

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** You always tell us we're too late.



**Mr. Sterling:** One of the members opposite, the member for Ottawa Centre, a good friend of mine, says that we always say it's too late. But the truth of the matter is that some legislation needs different time frames than others. My feeling on this bill is that there will be considerable interest in this, and my concern is that a great number of people in the province of Ontario who are not on the side of going forward with this bill will only wake up after the process is finished, and then will be upset.

The concern that I have over this bill is mirrored by the privacy commissioner: the privacy concerns and the abrogation of privacy rights which we gave to people in law some time ago. I'm told that there are 50,000 or 60,000 adoptions which have been formalized in Ontario at the present time where there are sealed records. The law has been that those records would remain closed and that neither the natural parent nor the adopted child, even if he or she was at majority—over 18—could obtain those records. But as Mr. Klees correctly points out, there is a system for people to unite, for people to get a copy of a record; there is that possibility through our present process. Mr. Klees points out that, in fact, he has gone through that process and that, in fact, that information is there.

I also would note that the Ministry of Community and Social Services will disclose information now without consent where there is a health, safety or welfare issue. In other words, if an adoptee has a health problem, he can go to the ministry and ask for health information about his parent or parents.

1730

The other concern I had, and I hadn't realized until the member for Prince Edward-Hastings, Ernie Parsons, who has worked in the children's aid society—I'm told by him and other people who have worked in this area that only about 25% of these records have the name of the father on the record. When the natural mother has been asked for the name of the father, there's no check with the father as to whether or not he's claiming to be the father of this particular child. So it leads to a whole number of other issues that could arise if an adoptee is reunited with the natural mother and finds out that the record says there's no father. Of course, the natural reaction would be for the adoptee to want to know who that father might be, if he or she was inquisitive about the first part of it. So there are some other issues that haven't really been discussed. I think there has been a misconception out there that at the present time there is no way for a person to get their adoption records. There is a way to get it, but it does require consent.

The second issue I want to bring forward is the whole matter of privacy. I noted when the minister introduced this legislation and made a statement to the Legislature, I had thought from her statement that Ann Cavoukian, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, was in favour. I read the words of the minister on that date, March 29, when the bill was introduced:

"One woman, an officer of this Legislature—our privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian—was extraordin-

arily helpful in the development of this bill. The back and forth between our offices has led to a much better proposed bill. I thank her for her interventions, and I thank her for her thoughtfulness. While Ann could not be here in the House today, her assistant commissioner, Ken Anderson, is here. Ken, please take our sincerest thanks back to her when she returns.

"We will have the opportunity to discuss, and to enhance if required, the components of this proposed legislation."

I thought from that statement that Ann Cavoukian agreed to this legislation. Well, nothing could be further from the truth, because the very next day the privacy commissioner says that she disagrees with this.

"A new bill tabled today on adoption disclosure can lead to thousands of Ontarians having their privacy invaded, says Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner Ann Cavoukian.

"Going from this day forward, with everyone aware of the rules, I am in favour of openness in adoptions." She goes on to express her concern that this legislation goes further than any other province in Ontario. The difference between our legislation and the other provinces is—and I think people should understand the difference—in other provinces, either the natural mother or the adoptee has the right to go to the record-keeper and say, "Do not disclose. Keep my privacy intact." Under this legislation, the adoptee or the natural parent does not have that right to go to the record-keeper and say, "Keep my information secret." All you have the right to do in either case is to say, "I do not want to be contacted by a child I put up for adoption," or vice versa, the adopted child could say, "I don't want to be contacted by my natural mother."

Now, the big section in the bill to prevent somebody from breaking that particular part of the law is that there could be a fine. They say that, to a person who contravenes the sections of the bill, there could be a fine of not more than \$50,000. Well, who's going to prosecute either their natural mother or their natural child? It really is a hoax. The non-contact provision in this adoption bill is a hoax.

Ann Cavoukian says that she will support this legislation if the government changes the bill and says that an adopted child who has gained their majority, or is 18 years or older, or the natural mother has a right to contact the registrar and say, "Do not disclose. Retain my privacy." I find that a reasonable position to take in terms of going backwards in law.

As well, I think there is a long tradition in our courts and in our court systems to not make law retroactively. Law can be made two different ways. It can be made by statute, as we are trying to do, as we are talking about doing, here in the Legislature, or it can be made by the courts. Where there is a hole in our law where there is no rule, then our courts will make the law. The courts never make a law retroactively. They never go back. So there is a presumption that is long-standing in our courts and in our jurisprudence, there is a presumption against retro-

activity in the interpretation of any statute law or common law that we have.

In going to the library, I wanted to look at some of the construction of statutes. I want to quote from page 553 of the fourth edition of Sullivan and Driedger on the construction of statutes. The statements on this presumption of not being retroactive are really quite important. I want to read one or two of those. I hope I can find the one I was looking at before. Oh, yes, here it is:

"It is obvious that reaching into the past and declaring the law to be different from what it was is a serious violation of the rule of law. As Raz points out, the fundamental principle on which rule of law is built is advance knowledge of the law. No matter how reasonable or benevolent retroactive legislation may be, it is inherently arbitrary for those who could not know its content when acting or making their plans. And when retroactive legislation results in a loss or disadvantage for those who relied on the previous law, it is unfair as well as arbitrary. Even for persons who are not directly affected, the stability and security of law are diminished by the frequent or unwarranted enactment of retroactive legislation."

That's basically what our whole society is based upon: If you act within the law today, you should be able to rely on that law as you go forward, whether it's two years from now, five years from now or 10 years from now. So I have a great deal of difficulty with the retroactive aspect of this legislation.

As well, I quote from "Retrospectivity in Law" by Elizabeth Edinger, from the University of British Columbia Law Review. From her article on page 8: "In all retroactive laws there must be an element of surprise, by which persons whose rights are affected are taken unawares. They are called upon to act in a manner different from what they had been led by the settled state of the law to anticipate. So repugnant is such a system of legislation to our natural sense of justice, that it has been stigmatized as more unreasonable than that adopted by Caligula, who was said to have written his laws in a very small character and hung them upon high pillars, the more effectually to ensnare the people."

This whole notion of going back and making laws affecting the decisions of people that were made 20, 30, 40 years ago is absolutely repugnant to our law system. I can't say it any more clearly than that.

1740

For these reasons, I think it is extremely important that members of the Legislature take this bill very, very seriously. This is not a normal piece of legislation that we pass on a day-to-day basis in this Legislature; this is a bill that goes against our natural law that we so ardently follow. It has been my experience most recently that this government has seemed to forget about the rule of law, about natural law, about retroactivity, on far too many occasions. I think it's absolutely necessary that we change that particular provision in committee. I will not be able to vote for this bill on second reading. I will vote for the bill on third reading, if the privacy commis-

sioner's suggestions are taken in the bill and it is amended for third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? The member for Oshawa.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Durham.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Why not Durham?

**Mr. O'Toole:** My riding, Durham, is really a subsection of Oshawa in terms of Durham region and Durham riding.

I do appreciate the comments made by my learned friend from Lanark–Carleton. I just wanted to be in support of the observations he has addressed.

If you look at the retroactivity nature, I would say that is a very important rule of law, whether real, natural or otherwise. It's the understanding of the people when they enter into agreements that these agreements will stand the test of government intervention.

At the same time, also recognizing the rights of the child—it's very important in this adoption issue, and in today's age we understand collectively that there is a process today that allows consenting parties to the agreement on adoption to be able to match up.

But I believe the no-contact provision, as I said earlier in one of my small remarks, could specifically allow genetic information to be released while not disclosing identity. I think that would go a long way, as a reasonable amendment, to addressing the issues even of the member for Toronto–Danforth, who has long advocated for this legislation.

I support the rights of the child here, as a parent of five children.

I think the remarks by the member from Lanark–Carleton were exactly what the sentiments of Ontario's population would be: to move forward for the rights of the child on adoption disclosure, without retroactivity affecting the rights of agreement and contract in law that consenting adults made with the rights at the time.

But given the technology today, I believe this legislation could pass, with a couple of minor amendments, and go a long way to providing access to information that children and their future health needs warrant.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

The member for Lanark–Carleton has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Sterling:** Some of my other colleagues would like to speak on this bill, so I'm not going to comment long on the member for Durham, but I think it is a bill that everyone should be interested in, from the point of view of how far it goes from our normal institutions of the Legislature and the law.

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):**

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting Bill 92.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just to be clear, what we're talking about is referring the bill for third reading only, and that's all the motion would deal with? The affirmative? It's yes? Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I've been advised that we have a motion on the floor, which is the motion for second



reading. So we should deal with that motion before we deal with any other motion.

Starting with this, Ms. Papatello had moved second reading.

Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I'm pleased to be able to make some comments concerning this bill before the House.

Let me be very clear at the outset that I would support the concept of this bill very strongly in that I believe that people should have a right to find out where their roots are, who their ancestors are or where their children might be, but only with the permission of those people who are affected. I'm basically making the point that my two caucus colleagues have made: that the retroactivity, the nature of this bill, is very offensive.

The disclosure veto, as the privacy commissioner talks about, is a very important one, and the retroactive nature of this legislation falls in line with the retroactive nature of some aspects of the greenbelt legislation that this government has introduced; it falls in line with the retroactivity of some of the budget bills that were brought in in the first budget bill dealing with school taxes on independent schools. That was rather vindictive retroactivity, where people who had put their children in independent schools, expecting to receive the government grant for some of that or a tax write-off for some of those expenses, found out almost a year later that that expense against their income tax was no longer permitted. That retroactivity had very serious consequences to many of those people.

A number of things happened that our member from Ottawa—Nepean pointed out—

**Mr. Sterling:** —Lanark—Carleton.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** Lanark—Carleton, the member from down east there somewhere. As he pointed out, when the minister announced this in the House, she announced it in such a way that led people to believe that the privacy commissioner was very helpful in the creation and development of this bill. She talked about the "back and forth between our offices, which has led to a much better proposed bill," and thanked her for her intervention. I'm sure she led everyone in this House to believe, anyone who was listening, that the privacy commissioner was fully in support. It would be improper to say that, but you certainly did lead everyone in this House to believe that there was support from the privacy commissioner for this legislation. Although she was not in the House on that day, the assistant commissioner, Ken Anderson, was here and she asked him to take her sincere thanks back to the privacy commissioner.

Well, the next day the privacy commissioner came out with a statement and then did a number of press releases, wrote a number of articles, wrote a number of letters to the editors, was very active in pointing out that thousands of Ontarians could have had their privacy invaded by Bill 183 because the retroactive changes in the rules governing adoption disclosure exposed the identities of birth parents who entered into the adoptive process in an era

when secrecy was the norm. The no-contact notice is not nearly strong enough, in the privacy commissioner's opinion, one which I agree with wholeheartedly. She suggests that unless there is a disclosure veto—in that you can put a disclosure veto in your file—this legislation should not be passed by this House for the benefit of Ontarians.

**1750**

It goes on to talk about the experiences in other jurisdictions—BC, Alberta, Newfoundland—who have the type of legislation the privacy commissioner is suggesting that we should have. In their experience, there have been something like 3.5% to 5% of people who have implemented that disclosure veto—not a large sector at all. In fact, under those conditions, 95% to 97.5% of the people who were involved with an adoption, either the mother or the children, would be able to obtain what they needed out of the legislation. I suppose what this government is saying is that a 2.5% or 5% minority in this case can be overlooked, and I think that's a grave error. I think it's a grave mistake that we're making, because when we begin to overlook even the smallest of our minorities, we're on a very slippery slope and headed to a very dangerous place. I would ask the minister to consider very seriously the implementation of a disclosure veto in this legislation.

The only place in the world they've been able to find that has legislation such as we're contemplating here today is New South Wales, in Australia, and that's been cited as an example. But two years after that law came into effect, the New South Wales Law Reform Commission reported that a significant minority of birth parents felt the law violated their privacy, that a significant minority of adoptees disapproved of the law and that a majority of adoptive parents were opposed to the law. One year after New South Wales brought in its law, the Australian state of Queensland brought in an adoptive law with core principles similar to what Dr. Cavoukian, our privacy commissioner, is advocating.

Why would you have a privacy commissioner if you're not going to listen to her, especially on these very, very significant issues? According to the commissioner, relatively few Ontario birth parents would file a disclosure. In fact, in Alberta and BC, as an example, a small minority indicated that they would, and that amounted to about 5%. Of the 250,000 people who are involved in this process, that would amount to a minority of about 12,500.

Perhaps we should put that minority in perspective: 12,500. Who amongst us in this House would be elected and sitting here today if there was a minority of 12,500 people who voted for our opposition? I would suggest that you think about that, put that into perspective and consider where we're going to go with this bill in the way it is currently written. Give some serious consideration to that, and I would ask that the minister seriously consider where the privacy commissioner wants us to go with this piece of legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. There are a lot of areas of concern that have been brought forward. Most of all, I agree with the members who have spoken about the retroactivity of the bill. We have some strong concerns about going back. When people enter into agreements, the basis of those agreements is how they make their decisions. That, as the privacy commissioner has stated, is certainly going to affect a lot of individuals, and they have no say in how that is going to take place—somebody else is going to make the decision for them—when they have gone into an agreement and made that decision at that time.

I know that there are some other areas that had some strong concerns—the court fines. Does anybody expect that court fine to move forward, and how is a judge going to implement that fine and set a precedent of charging somebody up to \$50,000 for breaching that contract? Yes, I would agree that giving individuals the ability and the full right to move forward to discuss and find out how it's going to be—so long as there's consent on both sides. However, when there's not, there is strong concern. You need that veto to make sure that those individuals who don't want to be contacted aren't contacted in this particular situation.

Also, I would hope that the legislation goes to committee to give individuals who are willing to come forward and speak on their concerns on this particular issue the opportunity to come forward. I know that one group that has always had some strong concerns with this legislation but I haven't heard too much talk about yet in this chamber has been the Catholic adoption services, which is the largest adoption service provider in the province of Ontario, and how they feel it's going to impact their community and how their adoptions are going to move forward and what may or may not happen as a result of that.

My main concern is the retroactivity. I have some strong concerns that it's going to impact people where somebody else is making a decision where they have entered into an agreement in the past. I would certainly hope we get the opportunity through the committee process to look at that very concerning issue.

**Mr. Bisson:** I just want to say quite quickly that I will be supporting this legislation. I had the opportunity in a previous speech to say why. My half-sister contacted us about four or five years ago. We would never had known if she didn't have, finally, by luck, the ability to find us. That whole process could have been made a lot simpler if this kind of legislation had gone through. I can tell you that my mother, my brother, my sister and my new

sister—who was always my sister removed at adoption—are very happy as a family unit and think it's a great thing. We support the legislation.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Very briefly, I just wanted to recognize the member from Halton's remarks as well as the member from Oshawa, that members from this side are supportive in principle. We're happy to think that this will go to committee, and, at that, it would be a much-improved piece of legislation protecting the rights of adopted children.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? The member for Halton has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I've made myself clear.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? Is there any other member who wishes to participate in the debate? If not, Ms. Pupatello has moved second reading of Bill 183. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I have been handed a deferral by the chief government whip. The vote on second reading of Bill 183 will be deferred until Tuesday, May 3, 2005, at deferred votes.

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 9, the House may continue to meet past 6 p.m.

**Interjection:** No.

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting Bill 92.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed. Minister?

## MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS

(continued)

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I move that the order of the House referring Bill 92, an Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001, be discharged and that the bill instead be ordered referred for third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The minister has asked for unanimous consent. Do I have agreement? Agreed.

It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*











**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Arnott, Ted</b> (PC)	Waterloo–Wellington	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Arthurs, Wayne</b> (L)	Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
<b>Baird, John R.</b> (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	Opposition house leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
<b>Barrett, Toby</b> (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Deputy Opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick</b> (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher</b> (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
<b>Berardinetti, Lorenzo</b> (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Bisson, Gilles</b> (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie</b> (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J.</b> (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs
<b>Broten, Laurel C.</b> (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire au premier ministre
<b>Brown, Michael A.</b> (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
<b>Brownell, Jim</b> (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael</b> (L)	St. Paul's	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
<b>Cansfield, Donna H.</b> (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint
<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V.</b> (L)	Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Chudleigh, Ted</b> (PC)	Halton	Deputy Opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Churley, Marilyn</b> (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Colle, Mike</b> (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph</b> (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
<b>Craitor, Kim</b> (L)	Niagara Falls	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Speaker / Président
Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	
Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Sarnia–Lambton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Duguid, Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Urban) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Secteur urbain)
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement Chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Whitby–Ajax	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Fonseca, Peter (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Erie–Lincoln	
Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Burlington	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	
Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)	Parkdale–High Park	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Klees, Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for democratic renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	Chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Marsales, Judy (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton</b> (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	Deputy opposition House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Milloy, John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)	Stoney Creek	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / York-Nord	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services (Disabilities) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires (Personnes handicapées)
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade (innovation) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce (Innovation)
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve</b> (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Peterson, Tim (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry</b> (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra</b> (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Racco, Mario G. (L)	Thornhill	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph–Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjoint parlementaire au ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Smith, Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b>	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b>	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Lanark–Carleton	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b>	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b>	Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tory, John (PC)	Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Rural) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Secteur rural)
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Wilkinson, John (L)	Perth–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Tony C. (L)	Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général

## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

### **Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

### **Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

### **General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

### **Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

### **Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

### **Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

### **Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

### **Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

### **Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.



## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Lundi 2 mai 2005**

### **DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

#### **Semaine de l'éducation**

M. Kennedy.....	6715
M. Klees .....	6716
M. Marchese.....	6717

### **DEUXIÈME LECTURE**

<b>Loi de 2005 sur les services privés de sécurité et d'enquête, projet de loi 159, <i>M. Kwinter</i> Adoptée .....</b>	<b>6718</b>
---	-------------

<b>Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, projet de loi 92, <i>M. Gerretsen</i> Adoptée .....</b>	<b>6744</b>
--	-------------

<b>Loi de 2005 sur la divulgation de renseignements sur les adoptions, projet de loi 183, <i>M<sup>me</sup> Papatello</i> Vote différé .....</b>	<b>6750</b>
--	-------------

### **SANCTION ROYALE**

Le lieutenant-gouverneur .....	6713
--------------------------------	------

# CONTENTS

Monday 2 May 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Infrastructure program funding</b>	
Mr. Miller .....	6711
<b>Municipal conference</b>	
Mrs. Mitchell .....	6711
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Runciman .....	6711
<b>Kashechewan First Nation</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6712
<b>Arbour Day</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6712
<b>Asian Heritage Month</b>	
Mr. Wong .....	6712
<b>Police officers</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6712
<b>Laps for Lungs</b>	
Mrs. Van Bommel .....	6713
<b>Fire in Cobourg</b>	
Mr. Rinaldi .....	6713

## MOTIONS

<b>Committee sittings</b>	
Mr. Caplan .....	6714
Agreed to .....	6714

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Affordable housing</b>	
Mr. Caplan .....	6714
Mr. Hudak .....	6716
Mr. Prue .....	6717
<b>Education Week</b>	
Mr. Kennedy .....	6715
Mr. Klees .....	6716
Mr. Marchese .....	6717

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Municipal finances</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6723
Mr. McGuinty .....	6723
<b>Obstetrical care</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6724
Mr. McGuinty .....	6724
<b>Children's services</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	6725
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6725, 6726
Ms. Martel .....	6726
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	6727
Mr. McGuinty .....	6727
Mr. Kennedy .....	6727, 6731
Mr. Prue .....	6731

<b>Forest industry</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6728
Mr. McGuinty .....	6728
Mr. Ramsay .....	6728
<b>Affordable housing</b>	
Mr. Ramal .....	6728
Mr. Caplan .....	6728
<b>Greenbelt</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	6729
Mr. Ramsay .....	6729
<b>Environmental assessment</b>	
Mr. Prue .....	6729
Mr. Takhar .....	6729
<b>Education</b>	
Mrs. Sandals .....	6730
Mr. Kennedy .....	6730
<b>Electricity restructuring</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6731
Mr. Duncan .....	6731
<b>Electricity generation</b>	
Ms. Broten .....	6732
Mr. Duncan .....	6732, 6733
Mr. Miller .....	6733

## PETITIONS

<b>Justice system</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6734
<b>Anaphylactic shock</b>	
Mr. Levac .....	6734
Mr. Craiton .....	6737
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6734, 6735
Mr. Hoy .....	6736
Mr. Sterling .....	6736
Mr. Bisson .....	6736
<b>Go transit tunnel</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht .....	6734
<b>Anti-smoking legislation</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6735
<b>Municipal planning</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6735

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Private Security and Investigative Services Act, 2005, Bill 159,</b>	
<i>Mr. Kwinter</i>	
Agreed to .....	6718
<b>Municipal Amendment Act, 2005,</b>	
<i>Bill 92, Mr. Gerretsen</i>	
Mr. Hudak .....	6737, 6744
Ms. Martel .....	6743
Mr. Sterling .....	6743
Mr. Miller .....	6743
Mr. Bisson .....	6744
Agreed to .....	6744

<b>Adoption Information Disclosure Act, 2005, Bill 183, Ms. Papatello</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	6744
Mr. Sterling .....	6746, 6748
Mr. O'Toole .....	6748, 6750
Mr. Chudleigh .....	6749, 6750
Mr. Ouellette .....	6750
Mr. Bisson .....	6750
Vote deferred .....	6750

## ROYAL ASSENT

The Lieutenant Governor .....	6713
-------------------------------	------

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

Mr. Miller .....	6713
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6714

### Members' anniversaries

Mr. Bradley .....	6718
Mr. Sterling .....	6719, 6721
Mr. Bisson .....	6720
The Speaker .....	6721

### Sexual Assault Prevention Month

Ms. Papatello .....	6721
Mrs. Witmer .....	6722
Ms. Churley .....	6722

### Budget speech

Mr. Duncan .....	6723
------------------	------

Continued overleaf





No. 139

N° 139

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 3 May 2005

Mardi 3 mai 2005



Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 May 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### GREAT LAKES JAM

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** I rise in the House today to applaud an event that occurred last August just outside of Owen Sound. It was the Great Lakes Jam: three days of rock and roll. Would you believe, Alice Cooper and his snake made an appearance on Coffin Hill, along with other legendary musicians like Steppenwolf, Johnny Winter and Kim Mitchell?

It's called the Great Lakes Jam because Northern Sound Grove Park is situated between Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, offering a panoramic view of Georgian Bay. The 415 acres of rolling hills of the main site offered camping, washroom and shower facilities and provided an amazing venue enjoyed by all who participated.

Steward Madill and Rudy Meier own the property, and the event was professionally produced by Wolfgang Siebert and supported by the concertgoers.

Unfortunately, a slim majority of the council of the municipality of Meaford could not see the benefit of this event occurring this year and voted against it. This event has been hijacked by a small majority of malcontent ratepayers, referred to locally as "wallygators." Their opposition will stop the tourist potential and economic spinoff that an annual event concert could provide to this area. This NIMBY attitude prevents the region from being promoted provincially and nationally and even impacts on local charities.

The plan was that part of the proceeds of this year's event go to the Grey County Cattlemen's Association as well as St. John Ambulance, which is building a new training centre and office called the Ed Tottenham House in Owen Sound.

Most importantly, the majority of the local people want this. It's a chance for them to have an experience of a lifetime. My hope is that the council will come to its senses and issue a temporary bylaw for the next Great Lakes Jam and help bring world-class entertainment and an injection of money to the business community of my riding.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** It gives me great pleasure to rise today on the occasion of

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 mai 2005

the annual commemoration of Poland's May 3, 1791, constitution, which was the first in Europe and the second in the world.

To the Poles and their descendants, May 3 is a national holiday, for it bestows upon them a priceless heritage of humanitarianism, tolerance and freedom conceived at a time when most of Europe lived under the existence of unconditional power and tyranny.

The tyranny deemed the Polish Constitution too dangerous, and Poland lost its independence; its territories annexed by Austria, Russia and Prussia. In terms of a national life, Poland lost the entire 19th century, being reborn in 1918.

In the mid-1800s, the ancestors of my father, Paul Yakabuski, immigrated to Canada from the Kashub area of Poland. In 1963, he became the first person of Polish descent to be elected to the Ontario Legislature.

Barry's Bay also became home to the famous Polish Canadian test pilot Janusz Zurakowski. He passed away last year, but not before a monument and a park in the middle of Barry's Bay were dedicated in his honour.

This is a week of special celebration for those of us who are of Polish descent. At noon today on the lawn here at Queen's Park, I attended the flag-raising ceremony by the Polish Canadian Congress. On Saturday, May 7, I'm looking forward to joining the Wilno Heritage Society in celebrating friendship, fellowship and freedom from Communist rule, as well as the recognition of the tremendous impact the Polish Kashub culture has had and the contribution it has made to our community, Ontario and Canada.

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre):** This is Education Week, and yesterday I had the opportunity to go to two schools. At one, a choir of 450 students and an orchestra, simultaneously with students right across Canada from coast to coast, sang a song called *A Little Music*, by Chris Tait, where they celebrated what music is to our culture—all cultures, regardless of where you come from—how it's a level playing field for students so that they can participate in knowing and learning the discipline of music and understanding its correlation to a subject such as mathematics. It was a wonderful opportunity. There is nothing better. Can you imagine your world without music, the arts or literature? I certainly can't.

From there, I went to another school where 20 students in grades 6, 7 and 8 worked after school—not

during school hours—with Dell, a computer company, and the Toronto District School Board. Those students learned how to take apart a hard drive and put it back together again, and they got to keep the computers for the skills they had amassed. It was phenomenal, because Mr. Drummond took his time after school to work with those students.

That's what Education Week is really all about: celebrating the wonderful teachers, the administrators, the secretaries we couldn't possibly even begin to run our schools without, the maintenance people. They're phenomenal. Of course, the governance and the trustees are important as well, but the other critical component of every school is the parents, who make a difference every time they take their children to school, participate in learning, read to them during the evening or when they can, or engage them in any kind of sport after school or during the school hours.

As we all celebrate Education Week, let's not forget two very important words, and they are "thank you" to everyone who helps our children.

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Yesterday we heard that the government plans to table its budget on May 11, the day when Ontarians will again witness the sad reality of Dalton McGuinty's mismanagement of the province's books and his back-of-the-napkin approach.

The McGuinty Liberals simply make it up as they go along. They weave and dodge all fiscal responsibility, and when things get tough they just blame it on somebody else.

In the face of an ever-increasing unbalanced budget, the McGuinty Liberals have gone on a reckless spending spree, throwing our tax dollars to the wind in order to make up for their plummeting opinion polls.

1340

Speaking of Dalton McGuinty's budget disaster, Ontarians should be aware that last year's budget is actually going to bite them twice as hard this year. Families will be expected to pay twice as much in health tax in 2005 as they did in 2004. Even though McGuinty promised over and over that he would not raise our taxes one red cent, he's now going to dig even deeper into our pockets.

People in my community are asking, "Why is he doing this? Why are the Liberals taking more of our hard-earned money and delivering less and less?" To that question, there is always one very simple answer: Dalton McGuinty. Only McGuinty would introduce a health tax and in the same breath delist chiropractic, optometry and physiotherapy services. Only Dalton McGuinty would go on a spending spree and shy away from his fiscal responsibilities and promises to balance the books. And only Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals would use a back-of-the-napkin approach to Ontario's finances and continue to just make it up as they go along.

#### SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I want to wish everybody in the many diverse ethnic, cultural and religious South Asian communities a very happy South Asian Heritage Month this May.

This month we celebrate the contributions South Asians make to our communities, province and country. South Asians from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and many other countries are a vital part of our Canadian mosaic. They work hard, respect their families and get involved enthusiastically in community life.

South Asians make up about 7% of Ontario's population and cover the breadth of world languages, cultures and religions. In Hamilton and throughout Ontario, events carry the theme for 2005, which is Acknowledge, Educate and Celebrate.

On Saturday, May 14 at Hamilton Place Studio, starting at about 3:30 p.m., a wonderful festival will be taking place, and, anybody watching, I invite you down to our theatre to watch and experience the taste of South Asia. I know all of you here will join me in applauding the diversity and contributions of citizens from South Asia.

At the same time, we need to recognize the barriers and discrimination that continue to confront the South Asian communities: income disparities, lack of affordable places to live, mental stresses on South Asian children, prejudice. We can't turn our back on these issues but, rather, must meet them head on. We can open the door wider to the many skills and talents that South Asians have to offer and fast-track their Canadian accreditation so they can work in their given professions. We can strengthen our response to racism by restoring the Anti-Racism Secretariat, which made such positive strides in the past. Yes, we celebrate this special month, and we recommit to solving the outstanding challenges facing South Asians today.

#### WORLD ASTHMA DAY

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** I rise in the House today to ask everybody here to just stop and think what it would be like if suddenly you could not breathe. That is the way 2.5 million Canadians feel at some time or another because they suffer from asthma.

Today is World Asthma Day. Over the past two decades, the prevalence of asthma in Ontario has increased markedly. Approximately 12% of Ontario's schoolchildren have been diagnosed with asthma. Right now, it is the leading cause of hospitalization for children in this province, and it is a significant cause of school absenteeism.

While we still need to learn an awful lot about it, there are certain things that we do know, and one thing we know is that smog days keep people with asthma imprisoned in their homes or rushing to their emergency rooms. We know that the OMA has estimated that as a result of air pollution, by the year 2007, 2,250 Ontarians will die a premature death. That's like five to six jumbo



jets crashing and every Ontarian on board dying—because of pollution.

So we have to stop the killer smog. We can do it as individuals by being more judicious in our use of cars, lawn mowers and leaf blowers. As a government, we have taken action by closing the Lakeview coal generating station and replacing it with better alternative fuels, and we are taking action by bringing in legislation to ban smoking and second-hand smoke.

### ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke–Lakeshore):** It is with great joy and privilege that I stand today in the Legislature to recognize and pay tribute to the 214th anniversary of the Polish Constitution.

Today, Polish Canadians across Toronto and Ontario are celebrating and commemorating a country that pioneered constitutionalism in Europe and the world. As one of the first constitutions in the world, the Polish Constitution is a symbol of its people and their struggle for liberty, justice and honour.

We are very lucky to have the consulate of the Republic of Poland's office located in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I have had the pleasure to meet with the Consul General on several occasions, and he has joined us here with his family today. As well, I have had the opportunity to meet with many members of a strong, vivacious and proud Polish community in many corners across our province.

I am pleased, on behalf of the Honourable Gerard Kennedy, member for Parkdale–High Park, to say thank you to everyone who participated in today's flag-raising ceremony in the front of the Legislative Assembly to honour this momentous day in Poland's history. Over the weekend and throughout the week, there will be many celebrations and festivities to honour May 3, 1791, and I know that many members of my community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore will be marking Polish heritage and democracy today.

I want to extend my warmest wishes on behalf of the members of the Legislature to all Polish Ontarians and Canadians on today's most important anniversary.

### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I'm honoured to rise today to share with the House some of the exciting events going on in my riding of Brant as we celebrate Education Week.

Let's not make a mistake: Education Week is every week in the province of Ontario for education. Individual schools in both the Grand Erie board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board are hosting annual events, such as an open house all across the school system.

But they also have special events going on. One of the schools that I started my career in, Blessed Sacrament, is having a flower-shrub contribution to the environment,

and they're holding an appreciation barbecue for the students. Sacred Heart school, the last school I was principal of, is highlighting the students' written work as part of a young authors' festival. St. Gabriel's is re-writing and rerecording *The Cat Came Back*, and the grade sixes, along with St. Anthony Daniel's, are celebrating by participating in a robotics challenge at Notre Dame school. St. John's high school is doing a science Olympics; St. Peter's is having a speech contest; St. Theresa's—it's on and on and on.

AG Hodge, Central and Dufferin are having exhibitions of artwork. Pauline Johnson, where I graduated, is involved in the production, with 70 students and staff, of *Grease*. James Hillier school is inviting grandparents and special friends to celebrate the accomplishments of the school's students.

Education Week is an extremely celebratory festival of Ontario's education system. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Minister of Education and the Premier, their considerable talents are being spent on students and teachers instead of the unrest of the previous government. I look forward to more and more weeks of Education Week across the province.

### ROMANIAN ACCESSION TREATY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Today we are celebrating a special moment in the history of mankind. An important event took place last week that will have long-ranging effects for the people of Romania: the signing of the accession treaty of Romania to the European Union.

Helping us to celebrate this historic event are a number of distinguished guests who are here in our gallery: the Romanian Consul General, Nicanor Teculescu; Dumitru Popescu, Mr. Radu Iatan, and others.

While we celebrate this historic event, we are mindful of Romania's recent history. The people of Romania suffered under the yoke of Soviet domination and dictatorship for over two generations. But the very generation that suffered the most never forgot the true destiny of the Romanian people: the desire to throw off the yoke of oppression and stand free. They overthrew a dictatorship. They relit the torch of freedom and passed it on to this new generation of Romanians, who hold that symbol of liberty high, never to forget its real value.

Today as Romania's government signalled its clear purpose to join the western democratic family of nations, we wish to congratulate the people of Romania on their historic decision. [*Remarks in Romanian.*]

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Ms. Jeffrey from the standing committee on general government presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### ADOPTION INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES ADOPTIONS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 183, An Act respecting the disclosure of information and records to adopted persons and birth parents / Projet de loi 183, Loi traitant de la divulgation de renseignements et de dossiers aux personnes adoptées et à leurs pères ou mères de sang.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hoy, Pat
Arthurs, Wayne	Jackson, Cameron
Bartolucci, Rick	Jeffrey, Linda
Bentley, Christopher	Kormos, Peter
Bisson, Gilles	Kular, Kuldeep
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kwinter, Monte
Bradley, James J.	Leal, Jeff
Broten, Laurel C.	Levac, Dave
Brown, Michael A.	Marchese, Rosario
Brownell, Jim	Marsales, Judy
Bryant, Michael	Martel, Shelley
Cansfield, Donna H.	Matthews, Deborah
Caplan, David	Mauro, Bill
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McGuinty, Dalton
Craitor, Kim	McMeekin, Ted
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.
Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia
Dunlop, Garfield	O'Toole, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Oraziotti, David
Hampton, Howard	Parsons, Ernie
Horwath, Andrea	Patten, Richard

#### Nays

Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill
Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.

Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Qaadri, Shafiq
Racco, Mario G.
Ramal, Khalil
Ramsay, David
Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Monique
Takhar, Harinder S.
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tory, John
Van Bommel, Maria
Watson, Jim
Wilkinson, John
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wong, Tony C.
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 71; the nays are 12.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I would like to request that this bill go to the social policy committee.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. If the member from Burlington and the House leader would like to have their discussion, they can take it outside.

1400

## VISITORS

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to introduce, in the east members' gallery, Her Worship the mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, who's accompanied by city manager Janice Baker.

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I wonder if it's a point of order to introduce the mayor of Brampton. Mayor Susan Fennell is in the opposition's gallery, as is Marolyn Morrison from Caledon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** It seems there's going to be a chain effect. There are many, many mayors here today. I'd like to recognize them all and hope that they have a pleasant visit to our Legislature.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. In asking this question, I am not asking you to tell me any secrets or to reveal any information that would jeopardize budget secrecy. I simply want to ask you this: Given that we're only a week away from your next budget, have you given your Minister of Finance instructions to produce a balanced budget by 2007, as you promised you would do?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The leader of the official opposition is seeking something that he knows is part and parcel of our budgetary plan. We look forward to presenting that budget and providing all of the details that I know the members of the opposition in particular are very interested in.

Let me say this: We will be bringing forward a prudent and responsible plan that gives still further life to our three major priorities: education, health care and a strong and prosperous economy. We look forward to doing that on May 11.

**Mr. Tory:** I notice that nowhere in there was responsible financial management. It was a simple question



that didn't involve asking you about any secrets or any information; just whether you had given a simple instruction to your Minister of Finance to keep the promise you made about balancing the budget in 2007.

On page 26 of last year's budget speech, your Minister of Finance said, "The government of Ontario must balance its books ... and we will be reporting regularly on our progress."

Premier, the only report we've seen since then was an admission, three quarters of the way through the year, thanks to some accounting scheme you were doing, that the deficit was going to \$6 billion. Today you refuse to answer a simple question about an instruction and a promise you gave. You're making it up as you go. Will you stand here now and tell us that you will instruct the Minister of Finance to balance the budget by 2007, as you promised?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, I'm not going to provide specific details of this budgetary plan, but I can say that, when I made reference to one of our three priorities being a strong and prosperous economy, implicit in that is sound financial management.

I would draw a distinction between the approach that we are bringing and the approach brought by the former Conservative government, which saddled us with close to a \$6-billion deficit and added some \$43 billion to the provincial debt. I would categorize that as not being sound financial management. We will bring sound, responsible financial management to the people's finances.

**Mr. Tory:** I'm assuming that's going to start next week, because we certainly haven't seen it so far. In fact, the budget deficit is \$6 billion and rising from there. It is clear that this government has no plan whatsoever to balance—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. You may proceed.

**Mr. Tory:** It's clear that this Liberal government has no plan whatsoever to balance the books and that the Premier indeed has no plan whatsoever to keep his own promises made only months ago.

One other promise that was made was to undertake a review of government spending. Your minister indicated to the Legislature that you'd be reporting regularly on the progress made in finding waste and inefficiency. There hasn't been one report containing any specifics at all since then, the better part of a year ago. What specific progress has been made on this promise, a promise that should be central to a plan of prudent financial management that you talked about, and to balancing the books, as you promised, by 2007?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, I know the Minister of Finance is very much looking forward to speaking in some detail about some of the measures that we have already taken, about some of the efficiencies that we have already found and about the work yet to be done.

The minister has already identified \$350 million by way of efficiencies. Those were announced in December. There is obviously more work to do. We look forward to

detailing some of that in the upcoming budget and, as I say, we look forward to delivering that budget right here in this Legislature on May 11.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a new question to the Premier. You announced the number of \$330 million last fall but no specifics, and we still don't have any. You are making this up as you go along.

The amount of health taxes people pay this year will double under the scheme that was laid out in your budget last year. This, after you looked into the cameras during the election campaign and, like so many other solemn promises, promised not to raise taxes. The amount people will pay will double this year in your health tax, and we're over a month into the new fiscal year. Is it reasonable to expect that the hospitals—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The member from Sudbury and the minister, come to order, please.

**Mr. Tory:** People are paying double the health tax they paid last year under Mr. McGuinty's scheme. Is it fair to expect that the hospitals will be told how much funding they will receive for this year, now a month into the fiscal year, on budget day? Is that going to happen?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** We've invested an additional \$3 billion this year into health care, including \$1.7 billion more into our hospitals, and we're proud to be able to do that. One of the reasons, in part, we were able to do that is the result of our new health premium.

I want to remind the leader of the official opposition and Ontarians who may be watching that the leader is telling us that he is going to eliminate the health premium; he's going to take \$2.4 billion out of our health care system. That could mean the closure of at least 10 major Ontario hospitals. The discussion at that time will not be one about funding; it will be about the closure of hospitals.

Again, we look forward, on May 11, to introducing further details about our new financing for health care in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Tory:** Of course, it's not about closing hospitals at all; it's about spending all government money better, which you absolutely refuse to do.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** I want to quote from a press release that you issued on January 25, 2002, in which you said, "Ontario Liberals oppose the return of OHIP premiums because they are a tax hike on working families"—Dalton McGuinty.

Premier, the simple truth is, you are charging people double this year out of their pockets what you did last year with your illegal health tax. Last year, \$100 million of that money went to fire nurses in this province—almost 1,000 nurses. Will you stand in your place today

and tell people who are paying twice as much in your health tax this year whether one penny of that is going to go to firing nurses this year, or are you going to hire nurses like you said you would do?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** From time to time the truth is important and relevant in this place. We have funded—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The members opposite may not like to hear this, but it really is important. We have funded 3,052 new full-time nursing positions in Ontario, including 664 in our large hospitals, 538 in our small and medium hospitals, 600 in long-term-care homes, and 250 in home care and community mental health. We are proud to have provided that funding, and we look forward to doing more for Ontario patients.

1410

**Mr. Tory:** At least the Premier didn't deny laying off the nurses, because, of course, he did and his government did, at a cost of \$100 million out of the health tax—this, the same man who said in the same press release, "Families are already paying for health care with their taxes. Pay more for health care, pay twice for health care, but get less health care." That's what you said you were opposed to. That's exactly your plan: Pay more and get less.

My supplementary is to the Premier again. Today, the hospitals in the GTA/905 area said that your hospital funding is not keeping up with the explosive growth in population. All the hospitals ended last year with \$330 million in accumulated deficits. There has been no word at all from your government telling them what you're planning to do or whether you're not planning to do anything about those deficits. My question is this: How can you demand they send you plans by a very specific date or else and then just not get back to them with respect to what you're going to do about those plans and their funding needs for last year, let alone for this year?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I think it's important, once again, to compare and contrast. So far, we've invested \$1.7 billion more in Ontario hospitals. Let's understand what the Tories did on their watch. We went from 63 underserviced communities to 142. They cut \$557 million over two years from hospitals. They closed 28 hospitals. They closed 5,000 beds alone in their first two years. They spent \$400 million to fire thousands of nurses, and they compared Ontario's dedicated nurses to Hula Hoop workers. When it comes to home care, they cut home care funding, they lowered standards and they fired local boards that wouldn't keep quiet because they were busy complaining about the antics of this government. That is their record. I'll put that record up against our record any day when it comes to supporting health care and making the necessary investments.

#### TRANSIT FUNDING

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a question for the Premier.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. Let me bring the Minister of Community and Social Services to order first before you start your question.

Leader of the third party?

**Mr. Hampton:** To the Premier: Premier, one and a half years ago, you promised municipalities you would give them two cents a litre of the existing provincial gas tax to fund public transit. Today, municipalities, large and small, across Ontario are facing very tough financial circumstances, yet they still haven't seen the full two cents a litre of the provincial gas tax. In your May 11 budget, Premier, will the municipalities finally see the full two cents a litre of the provincial gas tax, or will this be yet another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** We are very, very proud of our gas announcement, and we have laid out our plan very clearly. We have already given one cent of the gasoline tax to the municipalities. The cheques have been issued. A couple of weeks ago, the leader of the third party said the cheques have not gone. All those cheques have gone, and those municipalities are putting those cheques to good use.

We have two mayors in this audience today. The mayor of Mississauga will tell you that we are buying 40 new buses, and similar announcements are being made in Brampton.

So I think we are very proud of that record, and our record is 100 times better than what your record has been so far.

**Mr. Hampton:** I didn't know that the question was so complicated that it needed a long non-answer.

I'll send this over to the Premier: "We will give two cents per litre of the existing provincial gasoline tax to municipalities for public transit." It wasn't one cent; it wasn't 1.5 cents; it was two cents a litre, Premier. Many municipalities are facing very tough financial circumstances. Toronto, for example, will start the next budget year \$438 million in the hole. Meanwhile, your government, the McGuinty government, isn't keeping your promise, and you're not meeting your financial obligations to municipalities. So I say to the Premier: Are the municipalities going to see the two cents a litre, as you promised, or will it be another McGuinty broken promise? Give this to the Premier, please. It's his promise.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I'm not sure what is happening to the third party. It was very clearly laid out in our budget documents right here last year. I'm not sure whether or not the leader of the third party has read that. Let me just read it for him. It says, "Starting in October, we will begin to deliver on our commitment to make two cents of the existing provincial gas tax available for public transit."

"We will begin with one cent this October, increasing to 1.5 cents in October 2005 and two cents in October 2006."



I'm not sure what is not clear in this statement that he doesn't understand.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to remind the Premier that what we remember from that budget is your \$3.7-billion Enron accounting trick.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'd like to hear the final supplementary from the leader of the third party. I'm getting disruption from the government side.

**Mr. Hampton:** What we remember from last year's budget is your attempted \$3.7-billion Enron accounting trick, which the provincial Auditor General blew the whistle on and said, "This isn't permitted."

Your ministers tried this past weekend to peddle the Minister of Finance's story with mayors and councillors from northwestern Ontario. If you want to read the press reports, they're quite interesting, because they told your ministers that you're not meeting your financial obligations to municipalities—not on the gas tax; not on the so-called new municipal financial partnership. You're not meeting your obligations.

The question is: In the election, you promised two cents a litre. Will municipalities see two cents a litre now, or are you going to continue to break your promises? Which is it, Premier? Are they going to see the money, or are you going to continue to break your promises?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I'm not sure why it's so hard to take yes for an answer. We are already giving one cent of the gasoline tax, we're going to move to 1.5 cents of the gasoline tax starting in October 2005, and then we'll move, in 2006, to two cents of the gasoline tax.

Let me just read what the mayor in the Kirkland Lake area said. He said, "I have been presenting our case since the mid-1980s and this is the first time that the government of the day has listened and taken action. Without your understanding and timely moves, our town would be facing huge tax increases, little, if any, capital works and a desperate future."

That says it all, for me, about what our government has done for municipalities. But I want to say to you again that we are moving from one cent to 1.5 cents, and then we'll be moving to two cents of the gasoline tax.

#### NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Premier: Last week I think your government really hit a low point. Despite your promises of funding autism treatment for children, despite your promises to end the clawback of the national child benefit, despite your promises to invest provincial money in child care, your members actually came in here and voted against a resolution which would hold you to your promises. Premier, my question is very specific: Are you, in this budget, going to keep your promise? Are you going to end your clawback of the national child benefit supplement from the lowest-income children and families in

this province, or will that be another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** Obviously, I'm not going to provide details as to the upcoming budget. But let me speak about our very short and recent history. We have provided more than \$1.7 billion in new funding benefiting Ontario's children. We've done something no other government ever did: We created a ministry responsible for children and youth services. We've invested \$1.1 billion in new education funding, \$365 million in special education funding, and \$58 million to create 4,000 new affordable child care spaces. That, by the way, is the first boost in 10 years.

**1420**

I know that, insofar as the NDP are concerned, we can never, ever spend enough money anywhere, but we've got to take into account our financial circumstances. Given those circumstances, I am proud of the investments we've been able to make that support Ontario's children.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, this isn't your money. This is money that the federal government designates for the lowest-income children in this province. It's money that they're very clear is supposed to go to the lowest-income children in this province. But you and your government take that money. You take thousands of dollars a year from families who are surviving on the lowest of incomes.

This was your promise, Premier. It was a very specific promise. You said that the clawback was wrong. You said that you were going to end the clawback.

Premier, in this budget, are you going to keep your promise? Are you going to stop taking federal money from the lowest-income children and families in this province, or will this be another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I do like the opportunity to clarify the record. I think it's important to note that individuals involved with the national child benefit—when the government re-directs that money, it goes right back to Ontario families in the form of the Ontario child care tax credit.

This is hardly a party that is going to argue against assisting families with child care. In fact, they bemoan that we don't move quickly enough in child care, and I agree. We are doing the best we can. Moreover, that funding goes into children's mental health agencies; it goes into children's rehab centres; it goes to municipalities, where \$42 million is driven into children's programs like new breakfast programs run by those municipalities for the very children all of us are talking about.

We have made a list, which is growing every day, of what our government has done to help Ontario's most vulnerable, and we will continue to add to that list be-

cause our determination is that this will be a government with a difference. We will take care of our most vulnerable people.

**Mr. Hampton:** I want to quote someone: "We will end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement. The clawback is wrong and we will end it."

Quote again: "I oppose the Conservative government's practice of clawing back the national child benefit ... a practice we will end during our first mandate." You're halfway through your first mandate, Premier.

This is what poor children say about your government. What's it like having this clawback of money? "Feeling ashamed when my dad can't get a job; not buying books at the book fair; not getting to go to birthday parties; not getting a hot dog on hot dog day at school; pretending that you forgot your lunch; not being able to play hockey; being teased for the way you're dressed; not getting to go on school trips."

Premier, you can say you're using the money for something else. The fact is, you promised to end taking money from the poorest children and the poorest families in this province. It's not your money; it comes from the federal government. It's supposed to go to the poorest children. Are you going to end the clawback?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I think it's important to note that the moment this government took office, we made a significant shift in the policy around the national child benefit. Let us say right now that the moment it became a McGuinty government, we returned \$7 million to the families in Ontario who are also on social assistance. I can tell you that that was a significant shift.

The last government was one of eight provinces across the country that started this child benefit clawback. I can tell you that all of us wish they hadn't done it. I can also tell you that we are moving—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I would ask the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Timmins—James Bay to come to order.

Minister, you have 10 seconds to wrap up.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Thank you, Speaker. It would take far longer to suggest what we have done since we became government to help children in Ontario. We will not stop. We are moving in the right direction. We have given a clear signal that we have stopped all the future increases that are coming from the federal government. That is far more than you did, because this—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby—Ajax):** My question is for the Minister of Finance, and I want to compliment him on the improvement in his ties. You're looking much better.

But that's not the Minister of Finance. The question, then, is for the Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Finance.

It's about the budget and about spending, Premier. You said in the budget last year, "We must hold the line on other spending," and that you'd restrict program spending to an average growth rate of just 1.9% a year. Well, this year, your spending has gone up—we're not sure what, and the Minister of Finance couldn't tell us the other week, but at least 6.9%; probably more than that. In order to accomplish your fiscal plan, spending next year will have to be a 0.6% increase in program spending. My question, Premier, is: Where are you going to cut spending in the fiscal year that just started?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Of course, the details will be outlined here on May 11. I'd say again to the public, it will be right here in the Legislature. It won't be like the Conservatives did, presenting their budget in an auto plant; it will be right here in the Legislature. The minister will outline a responsible fiscal plan.

I would just say to the public, you should recognize that, the last year in office, the economy grew at 1.3% under this government. Spending in the last three years of that government went up 21%. I don't want to take any lessons on the economy or the finances from that party over there. We will present a responsible fiscal plan that will deal with the essential areas for the province: health care and education. As I say, it will be a budget that is presented right here in the Legislature next week.

**Mr. Flaherty:** So we have from the putative Minister of Finance that he doesn't know where they're going to cut spending. We'll find out about that.

Do you know this? Or maybe the Premier knows this. You said a year ago in the budget—this is a promise; you're good on promises—two promises a year ago: first, a thorough review of major provincial assets and to report to the people of Ontario; and second, a major review of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario with terms of reference saying to report in the spring of 2005 on a date to be approved by the Minister of Finance. When are the people of Ontario going to see these reports? You promised them a year ago. Produce them.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Again, I will take absolutely no lectures from that party. I'll tell the people, 450 consultants were being used by them, primarily to take people off the payroll. We brought them back into the civil service and saved \$20 million a year. This is artificial—moving people off the payroll and wasting taxpayers' money. We are dealing financially responsibly with our budget, and there's but one example: \$10 million a year on partisan advertising hidden away. We've gotten rid of that. We have identified \$350 million of savings, and I assure you we're working aggressively on that. So I'll take absolutely no lectures from that party that took spending up 21% and 450 consultants outside. We saved \$20 million.

You will see next week, here in the Legislature, a responsible, long-term, fiscally sustainable plan that will



restore our health care and education system and get our finances in good control.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I'll just wait until the member from St. Catharines stops heckling.

### ILLEGAL TAXI OPERATORS

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, today, several hundred taxi drivers circled this building. They came and held a press conference, and they are really opposed and discontented with your amendments to the Highway Traffic Act. Your so-called anti-scooping amendments and provisions may be easily enforced at Toronto International Airport, but they are not nearly so easily enforced within the confines of the city of Toronto, and we know that there's more scooping taking place inside the city by airport limousine drivers than ever takes place at the airport.

Minister, we want you today to stand in your place and to announce that you will pull your amendments to part IV of the Highway Traffic Act and replace those with fair provisions for both sides. Will you do it?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member from Beaches—East York for his new-found interest in transportation issues.

1430

Let me tell you about the intent of this legislation. This legislation is intended to protect the public. It's intended to improve the safety of the passengers. This legislation is a major step forward for the taxi industry in this province. For 30 years, nothing was done to protect the taxi industry or the passengers and move this step forward. Our government is the only one that is moving this step forward.

I want to say to this member that he was on the Toronto council for a long time, and they are responsible for some of the legislation for the taxi industry. He did nothing when he was there. Now we are moving forward to actually move some of the things forward and make the life of the taxi industry—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Prue:** I'm proud of my role in the past. Even when you were doing nothing and couldn't even dream of politics, I was there.

You may recall as well, last year, that on September 10 the Premier, yourself, the member for Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale and the member from Brampton Centre attended a fundraiser at Pearson Convention Centre, of which the airport taxi and limousine drivers were a part—a fundraiser of \$200,000 for your party. You remember that, don't you? You also remember that the next week, a newspaper by the name of Sanjha Saveria Weekly came out and talked about how you had promised, for the \$200,000, to make these amendments. It came as no surprise to us that in February you brought these same amendments forward.

My question, Minister: Did you discuss those amendments of the Highway Traffic Act with the members of the airport taxi and limousine industry at that fundraiser, and what promises did you make them?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me tell you, I'm absolutely surprised and even, I think—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Many members seem to want to answer this question. Let me give the Minister of Transportation his opportunity to answer that question.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me just say this: I think there is absolutely no basis to these allegations, and this doesn't even require an answer from my point of view. But let me tell you that this legislation is about fairness, for making sure that the public gets protected and that we make the taxi industry viable in this province. What is wrong with making sure that illegal taxi drivers do not pick up passengers when there are licensed taxi drivers available? We are also making it illegal that anybody who arranges for taxi scoopers will get penalized.

I'm not sure what is wrong in this legislation that he does not find that it will improve the taxi industry in this province.

### ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Today we voted and passed second reading of a monumental piece of legislation: the adoption disclosure bill. Bill 183 brings forward the first substantive legislative amendments to Ontario's adoption disclosure laws in almost 80 years.

Minister, there were some concerns raised yesterday when the legislation was being debated surrounding the protection of privacy, specifically as to whether the proposed legislation allows adopted adults and birth parents the same right to privacy as Ontarians not involved in the adoption process. No adopted person should be forced to meet with their birth parent, and no birth parent, frankly, should be forced to meet with their child unless they want to. It's essential that both parties have the right to privacy and are protected at the end of the day. Minister, can you please assure this House that the privacy of those Ontarians who have entered into an adoption agreement will be respected?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question, because we are in fact making history today with the vote that we had in the House earlier. We're moving forward still. This bill is moving to hearings, where we'll have yet another opportunity to hear from the Ontario public around the provisions that we're outlining in the bill.

Let me say that if we do nothing, if we don't have a bill in the House, what currently happens is, no protection for people—

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound):** You're going on and on. Answer his question.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I'm trying to answer the question. I hope the members opposite are keenly interested in this. I understand that some of the Conservatives didn't vote—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. Member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, I know you're in good health, so come to order.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** Stop it, Bill.

**The Speaker:** Order. Ten seconds to wrap up.

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** In the absence of bringing in legislation for protection, frankly there is no protection out there for people. What we have in this bill is a no-contact provision. What the bill does is allow the right to information without the right to a relationship. No-contact is very important.

**Mr. Duguid:** I can assure the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound that indeed I did get an answer to my question, and I'm pleased to hear that the privacy of adoptees and birth parents will be protected.

Another concern that's been raised was with respect to the adoption disclosure act is the retroactivity of the bill. Under the proposed legislation, all adoptees and birth parents will be able to access information from birth records and adoption orders that was previously unavailable. There are people across Ontario who have been trying to locate their birth parents or children they have given up for adoption with little help from the government. They're extremely grateful for the help this legislation has provided.

Minister, can you please share with the House your commitment to making this bill retroactive in nature?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I am very happy to address the issue of retroactivity. The government did finally have to make a decision, because it really is the nuts and bolts of what we're doing.

People who have given up children for adoption or individuals who have been put up for adoption in that period of time have no availability to access who they are, and all this time we have respected that there are people who do not want to be found. We believe that the compromise is the right to information about someone's identity without the right to a relationship. Bringing in a no-contact provision protects those who don't want to be contacted, and yet those who have grown up never knowing who they are, or birth parents who have always wondered how their children fared, will at least have the most basic information. We believe that for those individuals who have had their rights trampled, it's time to right that wrong.

#### REGION OF PEEL

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln):** My question is to the Premier. I have in my hand an e-mail from Brampton mayor Susan Fennell stating that you told her in January 2004 that Peel restructuring was “not on the agenda.”

I also have a memo from Emil Kolb, chair of the region of Peel, in which he states that on June 30, at

6:30 p.m., you told him your government “will not be making any restructuring changes in Peel.”

I have a letter here from Caledon regional councillor Richard Paterak, which states that on February 25, 2005, you told them that you would be “following Judge Adams's report.”

Bill 186, as it stands, is a betrayal of those three promises that you made. This bill was born out of broken promises. Premier, what signal does it send to municipal leaders in Peel and across the province when the word of the Premier can't be trusted?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** First of all, let me take the opportunity to welcome all three mayors to Queen's Park today. We're delighted to have them here.

You will be aware, Speaker, as of course the mayors themselves are, that we invited Mr. Justice Adams to provide advice and recommendations. We are pleased and proud to be adopting eight out of nine of those recommendations. Let me tell you as well that we believe we have found a fair and balanced approach to dealing with this matter. No community has a majority. The end result is that the council itself will now be required to select its own chair.

We think we've set up these three communities and the Peel region itself on a path to success. We think it speaks to a tremendous amount of optimism that our government has when it comes to the community of Peel, and we have every expectation and desire that the mayors will work together in the interests of their respective constituencies.

1440

**Mr. Hudak:** Premier, the problem is that you've taken about a half-dozen different positions on this issue in the last year alone. Municipal leaders say that Bill 186 will deadlock Peel regional council with frequent tie votes. Your Minister of Municipal Affairs can't even answer basic questions about what happens with tied votes and how the chair would be appointed in that eventuality.

You mentioned the mayors. Just look to the gallery: Mayor McCallion on one side and Mayor Fennell and Mayor Morrison on the other. Your indecision and your broken promises have created a deep divide within Peel region. Effectively, your bill risks turning Peel council into a model of yourself: dithering, deadlocked and unable to make substantial decisions. Will you do the right thing and withdraw this legislation until a consensus can be found that all three mayors can work with, and bring the municipalities back together again?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's a little hard to stomach this commentary from a member of a government that thrilled itself in forcing amalgamations on so many communities throughout Ontario.

Again, to be clear in terms of what we've done here, we invited an independent, objective, expert third party in to provide some good advice. The communities themselves were having difficulty coming to terms with their shared future. We have adopted eight out of the nine recommendations. We have ensured that no single com-



munity has a majority. We'll require that the communities themselves, through their representation on regional council, select their own chair. We think that is a fair approach. We think it is the best approach, given the circumstances. The only additional element that is required to ensure this is a success is goodwill on the part of the people of Peel and on the part of the representation. They have everything it takes to enjoy still further successes long into the future.

### DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** To the Attorney General: Moira Welsh's articles in the Toronto Star expose Ontario's criminal justice system as, to this point, failing to protect children from a dangerous, chronic, serial, predatory pedophile. Applications for dangerous offender status are very much the exception rather than the rule. When are you going to be able to assure us that every pedophile conviction receives a thorough and complete review to determine the likelihood of a successful dangerous offender application and subsequent application in the courts?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I say to the member with respect to that particular matter, that particular issue and that particular person that the recommendation came up from crown counsel and I reviewed it, as I do all dangerous offender, long-term offender applications. I agreed with the recommendation and consented to a long-term offender application. That matter is before the court. I know the member would not want me to comment on that matter because then that would be an abuse of process and at the end of the day would have the opposite effect, I think, that the member would like to have.

I have consented to 35 dangerous offender applications since I have been Attorney General. We have a system in place that always flags those people who may constitute dangerous offenders. The crown then goes before the court to obtain a psychiatric assessment. If that is granted, then recommendations are made. The deputy or the assistant deputy makes a recommendation which I review. I consent to it, or I consent to a long-term offender application, or the third option is not to consent. But as I say, I've consented to 35 and I consented to this one.

**Mr. Kormos:** Attorney General, you know full well I'm not asking you to comment on a particular case, and that wasn't what the question was. You also know full well that preparing and presenting dangerous offender applications is incredibly labour intensive. Our crown attorneys' offices are burdened with incredibly high case-loads. Crown attorneys across the province are having to make some very radical decisions on a daily basis to clear those caseloads that cause huge backlogs in their offices and, quite frankly, in our courts as we are at the cusp, continuously, of yet more Askov applications.

When will you announce additional resources for crown attorneys across this province so that they can effectively pursue dangerous offender applications in every instance where there is a reasonable likelihood of that application being successful, rather than in the rare instance when you've made your own approval?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** Well, 35 dangerous offender applications is hardly rare. I say to the member that this government has done more on high-risk offenders in achieving a national consensus that will see—if Parliament agrees—changes to our dangerous long-term offender system, recognizance of high-risk offenders, DNA databank and a restriction of conditional sentences. We will have done more in 18 months on this subject than the NDP government did in their five years or the Tory government did in their eight years. I'm sure the member does not want to suggest for a moment that our hard-working crown attorneys are not in fact reviewing the cases appropriately, because they are.

I say to the member, with the greatest of respect—and I'm responding to him in the way in which he asked the question—you are an experienced member of this House who can lecture me on a lot of things, but not on this one.

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. David Orazietti (Sault Ste. Marie):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, a year ago, you introduced legislation to end the 60-hour workweek, a promise that we made that is now law in Ontario, and it's certainly a positive change that allows people to spend more time with their families. However, at that time, you committed to ensure that employment standards would be more vigorously enforced so that workers' rights in Ontario would be more effectively protected. As we all know, Ontarians enjoy a standard of life that is unparalleled in many other places in the world, but unfortunately there are still violations in the workplace. Minister Bentley, can you elaborate on the progress of our government's initiative to vigorously enforce employment standards?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour):** I would like to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for his question and also for his advocacy on behalf of the most vulnerable workers in the province. He has truly been an ardent advocate on behalf of the people who cannot always advocate for themselves.

The member is quite right. We introduced and passed the end of the 60-hour workweek, notwithstanding the opposition of certain others. The right legislative framework is where we start. The next level is to make sure that employers are aware of their obligations and workers are aware of their rights. If you are not aware of your obligations, you will never be able to comply with them, and if you're not aware of your rights, you will never be able to seek the law's assistance. We've done two things. For employers, we've introduced the workplace gateway, an easy-to-use Web site that provides employers with easy-to-use information about how to be in compliance

with their obligations. For workers, we've introduced a series of information pamphlets and Web site information available not only in English, not only in French, but in 19 additional languages, and we've partnered up with more than 100 community groups to get the information out there to the people where they need it and how they need it.

**Mr. Oraziatti:** I'm pleased we're taking the steps necessary to help workers exercise their employment rights and expedite their claims, not just in English but in numerous languages. This is a very important issue, as Ontario's workforce is so diverse and comprised of many people whose first language may not be English.

Minister, I would also like to know what we are doing for the most vulnerable workers, those who may be aware of their rights but too afraid to demand them because they are afraid that, by speaking up, they could lose their jobs or suffer other consequences.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** Once again, the member from Sault Ste. Marie is thorough in his analysis of the situation. If the positive doesn't work, what do you do next? There are two aspects to that: First of all, as the Provincial Auditor outlined in two audits—one conducted in 1991 and the other completed at the end of the Tory watch, in 2003—you've got to have proactive inspections. They had gone down to only 151 in the entire province in the year ending March 31, 2004. We committed to more than 2,000 proactive inspections; those are unannounced, surprise inspections at workplaces. We actually completed more than 2,300 such inspections for the protection of workers, but that's not all. In the previous 14 years to the end of 2004, there were 97 prosecutions—March 31, 2004. In the next 12 months, we conducted 226 prosecutions. We've done more to enforce the law in 12 months than the two previous governments did in 14 years.

#### HIGHWAY 26

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, it involves the realignment of Highway 26 between Stayner and Collingwood. As you will know, to our astonishment, last summer your government cancelled, in mid-construction season, the continuation of constructing this highway. It's 6.7 kilometres; it's vital to the greater area. All the mayors have talked to you during AMO and other conferences. You've had delegations down. Some 20,000 cars a day travel on the old piece of Highway 26. This new realignment is badly needed for safety reasons.

Will you re-begin construction? I've never heard of any government coming in and cancelling such a small project, which is needed for safety, as you did last summer. The construction season has started now, and there is not a bulldozer in sight. When are you going to get the people back on that highway and get it built?

1450

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member for asking this

question. I think I have answered questions on Highway 26 in the House prior to this as well.

We are completing the design and property acquisition on that highway, which is the realignment of Highway 26 between Collingwood and Wasaga Beach. The environmental study is also underway to examine ways to address the congestion on Highway 26 between Collingwood and the Stayner area that the member asked for. All those plans will be outlined in our 10-year infrastructure plan as we move forward.

**Mr. Wilson:** Minister, that was your excuse when you removed the construction crews in the middle of last summer—an astonishing sight for all of us up there. Right in mid-contract, you pulled them off the site because—I don't know; what?—it's in an opposition member's riding? Is that why you've done this? You're here to govern for all the people of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Wilson:** So far, every time I ask this question, the same thing is done as today: I hear about property acquisition. I've talked to everyone, including the retailers—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I'm trying to hear the member from Simcoe-Grey's question. Could you come to order, please.

**Mr. Wilson:** I've talked to the people you say you need to buy property from, and they say that no one from your ministry is talking to them. There are only a couple left and they happen to be big retailers—the big-box stores—that want to build on the new realignment. You talk about the design study. Well, here is the design study, completed in September 2002.

Finally, you talk about your government's 10-year capital plan for highways. This was included in the 2000 budget: \$33 million. The ministry had that money. It is a dereliction of duty that they have not spent that money on what Parliament acquired that money for.

Minister, when are you going to start reconstructing the highway?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Sometimes the truth does come out in this House, though. This was in the 2000 budget, as the member said.

They had eight years to complete this highway and they did nothing. According to their own plans, they were supposed to have this completed in 2003, and it was never done. It's one of those plans—they always announced a project but never completed any, and this is one of those projects.

**Mr. Wilson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I request a late show, and I'll file the necessary papers.

Could you drive up there and see the half-completed highway that you stopped—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. As you said, I'm sure you will file the necessary papers for that late show.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. In northwestern Ontario,



there is now information technology that provides for medical X-rays and diagnostic images done in smaller communities to be instantly digitally transmitted to medical specialists at larger health science centres who can make immediate diagnoses and recommend treatment. Obviously, this saves the health care system a lot of money. Patients don't have to travel. Specialists don't have to travel. You can make better use of medical specialists.

But the northwest health network has informed your government that an immediate funding increment of \$5.6 million is needed to sustain and develop this important medical and information technology system. What they want to know is, will that funding be made available as a result of the May 11 budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I appreciate that the leader of the NDP is taking the opportunity to put his request on record, but he knows that we can't speak to the details on that.

Coincidentally, I was flipping through the channels last night and saw, I think it was on TVO, a story about that kind of technology, which is very impressive. I know it's very helpful to communities that are particularly affected by a shortage of doctors. I'm sure the Minister of Health is considering that and would like to have further opportunity to speak to it, but the member knows that I cannot disclose specific details regarding the upcoming budget.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm going to send the Premier the letter that the northwest health network sent over. What was really interesting is that, last week, someone named Prime Minister Paul Martin was in Thunder Bay to have a photo-op at this telemedicine demonstration, to say to the world that this is leading-edge technology that needs to be developed.

This is what the northwest health network says to you: "Simply put, the regional hospitals do not have the capital or operating funds to continue with these projects. An immediate cash injection of approximately \$5.6 million is needed. Given the progress to date, the collapse of both of these projects due to a lack of funding would be a terrible waste."

Premier, you've received new funding from the federal government for medical technology, for diagnostics, for virtually everything that's involved here. What the people who run this system want to know is, since this system actually saves money for the health care system, will you use some of that federal money to ensure that this system can grow and be sustained and developed even further?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** We're very pleased with the arrangements we've been able to make with the federal government when it comes to providing further investments of health care dollars in the province of Ontario. But I can tell the member opposite that, taking into account all the new federal health care funding, taking into account all the new revenue generated by the health premium, it is not nearly enough to satisfy the kinds of investments that we have to make in health care.

I thank the member for his question. I will direct it to the Minister of Health and encourage him to speak with the member directly about it.

## COURT FACILITIES

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, last year, this government announced that we would be investing \$21 million to provide the community of Pembroke with effective and timely justice services. As you know, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke seems somewhat shy to discuss good news in his riding. So I would like the people of Pembroke to know, because they are looking forward to finally having accessible and effective court services in their riding: Can you reassure them and this House that the work is underway in Pembroke and that the community will have their new courthouse soon?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I want to thank the member for her question. Yes, I have noted the lack of questions on this particular issue from the local member, but I'm sure he too is very pleased with the good news that we have for the people of Pembroke.

I'm pleased to report that we are indeed moving forward on a new consolidated courthouse in Pembroke. Work is underway. The new consolidated courthouse is a priority for the residents of Pembroke. Just last month, we announced that the construction tender contract had been awarded to an eastern Ontario construction company. The site will house a consolidated courthouse, which will include the Superior Court of Justice and crown attorney offices as well as court administration offices. Not only that, but the expanded facility will feature barrier-free access for people with disabilities and enhanced security measures to provide greater safety for court users. Additional courtrooms will also allow—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Smith:** That's great news for the people of Pembroke. It also dispels some of the conspiracy theories of the member from Simcoe–Grey.

I understand that Pembroke, however, is not the only new consolidated courthouse underway in this province. I understand that there's another courthouse underway in Durham, where their member is equally reticent to refer to any good news. Can you let us know the status of the consolidated courthouse in Durham?

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** I had better share the good news and refer this supplementary to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I was hoping that the member from Whitby–Ajax would ask this question before he leaves this Legislature, but I understand he's too busy with his nomination.

We'll get on to the Durham courthouse, which has a long, tortuous history. First announced by the Rae gov-

ernment in its dying days, the Harris-Eves government literally did nothing to advance it, despite the fact that the member from Whitby–Ajax was the Attorney General, despite the fact that two finance ministers were there.

1500

I have absolutely great news to share with this Legislative Assembly. We are proceeding with the Durham consolidated courthouse. The RFP has gone out. It's been in the newspapers. As we have committed with our partners at the region, we are on time. We are on schedule with a winter 2008-09 delivery. It is good news for the—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member from Whitby–Ajax, come to order. You're skirting some very unparliamentary language. I'm hearing it from my side, and I didn't want to interrupt the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his well-earned question.

#### CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I have a question for the Premier. I just returned from a recent northern trip, and on that trip I met with several municipalities. Many of these communities expressed frustration with the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund program and the municipalities that haven't been approved.

I met with the mayor from Smooth Rock Falls, and I'd like to draw to your attention their application. Smooth Rock Falls applied for COMRIF funding, and that municipality was turned down. They're under a Ministry of the Environment Safe Drinking Water Act work order, and that has to be completed by December 31, 2005—it's work on their water system. The total cost of the work order is \$432,000. The amount they're asking for from the province is \$288,000. To put it into some perspective for you, this will mean a tax increase of up to 40% for the municipality of Smooth Rock Falls. They said that under the past government, they were at least treated fairly. The mayor's exact words to me were, "What's this government trying to do? Wipe out the north?" My question—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I'm more than happy to answer the question and to reassure the municipalities that this government plans on working with them, that this government believes that infrastructure is important.

You know what the member forgets? What the member who used to be the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines forgets to say in his question is that his party, when he was the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, cut \$658 million in funding to

municipalities in their 1995 budget. Do you want to know where all these problems started? It started when the Tory government, the Harris-Eves-Tory government, decided that they would abandon municipalities, not only across northern Ontario, but across Ontario.

We are proud of the relationship we have with the municipalities, not only in northern Ontario, but across Ontario, because we understand municipalities—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. That brings us to the end of oral questions.

### PETITIONS

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I appreciate the opportunity to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the federal Income Tax Act at present has a minimum amount of medical expenses for which a taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit;

"Whereas the health and medical expenses of every citizen in the province of Ontario, great or small, affect their overall net income;

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government moved in their 2004 budget on May 18, 2004, to delist publicly funded medical services such as chiropractic services, optometry examinations and physiotherapy services;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Income Tax Act remove the present minimum amount of medical expenses for which an Ontario taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit."

I am pleased to support that in the context of all the cuts to health care by the Liberal government.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas 20% of the adult population, or 1.8 million adults in Ontario, continue to smoke; and

"Whereas hospitality concepts like bars, pubs, taverns, nightclubs, Legions, bingo halls, racetracks and casinos are businesses with a high percentage of patrons who smoke; and

"Whereas more than 700 businesses in Ontario have invested tens of thousands of dollars each to construct a designated smoking room to comply with municipal bylaws;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Permit properly ventilated and separate designated smoking rooms in hospitality establishments that regulate



and control employee and customer exposure to second-hand smoke.”

I have signed it and will send it down with Cassandra.

#### TEACHER QUALIFICATION

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the 2005 graduates of the publicly funded faculties of education in the province of Ontario will have met all the requirements of the individual faculties; and

“Whereas these same publicly funded faculties of education in the province of Ontario have all met the stringent standards as outlined and controlled by the Ontario College of Teachers; and

“Whereas the 2005 graduates of the publicly funded faculties of education in the province of Ontario will be placed at a severe disadvantage if they are given a provisional certificate of qualification by the Ontario College of Teachers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To make the changes necessary to the Education Act and/or its regulations in order to grant the 2005 graduates of the publicly funded faculties of education in the province of Ontario a permanent certificate of qualification, or

“To deem that the bachelor of education degree granted to the 2005 graduates of the publicly funded faculties of education in the province of Ontario deems them to have completed the equivalent of the Ontario teacher qualification test, thus allowing the Ontario College of Teachers to grant these same graduates a permanent certificate of qualification.”

#### HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas noxious odours from the Halton Recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

“Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face threats to their health and well-being, and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

“Whereas for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment, as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton Recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue.”

As I am in agreement, I affix my signature.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario’s three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

“Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services’ sector and economies of the local communities; and

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario’s regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into ‘centres of excellence’ to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I send it down to the clerk’s table by way of Jonathan. Thank you, Jonathan.

1510

#### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I have a petition that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Thanks to Debbie Bruce from Erin Hills in Mississauga for her support and efforts in submitting this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is no established province-wide standard to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

“Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Education Act; and

“Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

“Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

“Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan.”

I so sign this petition and hand it to Joshua, our page.

## REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign this and give it to Cassandra to deliver.

## ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that's very similar to the one that I just read.

"Whereas there is no established province-wide standard to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned," request "that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3"—my private member's bill—"An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I sign my name to this petition and hand it to Inderraj Singh, our page right here. This is my dude.

## ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I'm pleased to get the opportunity to present a petition in the Legislative

Assembly of Ontario. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities as well; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intentions of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario exempt Legion halls, navy clubs, and other non-profit, private or veterans' clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

I affix my signature to the petition. Thank you very much again for this opportunity.

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to read here that was sent to me by a group of people among them, Geoff Watson of Rosethorne Road in Oakville. It's a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly requesting the banning of smoking in public places in Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 16,000 Ontarians each year die of tobacco-related causes; and

"Whereas the inhalation of direct and second-hand tobacco smoke both lead to health hazards that can and do cause preventable death; and

"Whereas more than four out of every five Ontarians do not smoke, and this large majority desires that enclosed public places in Ontario be smoke-free at all times; and

"Whereas preventing the sale of tobacco products, especially to young people, and banning the use of tobacco products in public and gathering places of all types will lower the incidence of smoking among Ontarians, and decrease preventable deaths;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Ontario Legislative Assembly enact Bill 164, and that the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care aggressively implement measures to restrict the sale and supply of tobacco to those under 25; that the display of tobacco products in retail settings be banned; that smoking be banned in enclosed public places or in workplaces, and banned on or near the grounds of public and private schools, hospitals and day nurseries; that designated smoking areas or rooms in public places be banned, and that penalties for violations of smoking laws be substantially increased."

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I sign it, and I'm going to ask Nathan to carry it for me.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition signed by the good citizens of Cambridge, directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.



"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities as well; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas by imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intentions of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario exempt Legion halls, naval clubs and other non-profit, private or veterans' clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

As I agree with it, I am signing my name thereon.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Delaney:** I have a petition here signed by a number of the staff members of Intercultural Neighbourhood Social Services, among them, Abba Ali, Nadia Baichon and Sophia Montague. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million"—and counting—"of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I absolutely endorse this petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature to it, and will ask Jonathan to carry it for me.

### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth"—Alliston—"is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I want to thank Steve Dickson of Alliston for circulating that petition, and I've signed it.

### VISITORS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm very pleased today to introduce good friends of mine, Terry and Laura Gregson, who are also the aunt and uncle of page captain Sean McConkey, and they're here today to see democracy in action.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's not a point of order, but thank you for introducing your guests.

1520

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE PEEL

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 26, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 186, Loi traitant de la composition du conseil de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I'd like to begin by welcoming the mayors and councillors, many of whom were introduced earlier today, who are in the galleries at Queen's Park today to be a part of this discussion. I'm proud to represent a part of the region of Peel that is affected by this legislation, specifically the town of Caledon. I'm going to talk a little bit about that as we go through today.

I came to public life on the assumption that it was the job of the government to solve problems and to solve them in a way that maximizes the public's confidence in the outcome. I also came to public life thinking, as I hope most of us do, that solving one problem by creating another would not normally be seen as good government.

I think we made a decision years ago—"we" meaning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the previous governments of Ontario—to do some planning and provide some services on a regional basis. Governments were constructed at the time in such a way that people within those regions could reasonably expect balanced representation that in turn would ensure that the needs and the dollars of the constituent municipalities would be fairly and properly represented. That kind of balanced representation would in turn ensure that the region's needs would be taken into account, as well as the needs, at any given point in time, of the constituent municipalities.

I respect and recognize, as I think other members do, the fact that over time some imbalance can be created, not by the design of these governments but by population growth and things that change. The current legislation and structure have been in place for some period of time, and it's not right that legislation can remain in place for years and years and a structure can, to some extent, become outdated in terms either of the way it works or the way it represents—or doesn't represent—people.

But as so often happens in government, I think we're about to make the same mistake again. I haven't been here too long, but I've been around this place and this process for a long time, and we're about to enact a piece of legislation—if in fact that takes place, and I'm going to finish with a plea that it not take place and that we continue to give this further consideration—that we will then find is in place and very difficult to amend or change for many years to come.

We all know that by the time you have additional studies, by the time you convince the government of the day—I hope it will be us by the time it gets to 2007; it's looking more like that every day, based on the performance of the people across the way—by the time the government makes a decision, by the time they draft the bill, by the time the bill comes to the Legislature, gets in the queue and ultimately is dealt with, it is a process that takes years and years.

The result is that legislation that is on the books today or legislation that would be passed—this bill, Bill 186—could in turn sit unamended for years and years, even after it, in and of itself, has become outdated or unfair. I don't think that's a good result. I don't think it's the kind of result that speaks to good government that you put legislation in place that can, in and of itself, very soon become outdated and represent a new problem that sits where the old one used to sit.

The report of Justice Adams—the Premier made reference today that some of its recommendations had been accepted but not others—tried to take this into account by suggesting a mechanism by which further population

changes that take place in the future could be taken into account as we go forward, and adjustments to the structure of the Peel regional council could take place over time, reflecting those changes in personality, so we don't have a situation where this bill, meant to address one situation that has been claimed to be unfair, and may well be, will create just such another situation down the road.

At that point, you have to ask yourself: How will we be any further ahead; how will we have served the public interest, in the broader sense and looking at the longer view? It's interesting that the only person who is totally objective about this—the only person who is not a politician who took a look at this issue with the agreement of all parties, including the provincial government and including mayors and so on, from a position of total objectivity—namely, Justice Adams—recognized both the current issue that has been raised by Mayor McCallion and by others and also the problem that will arise in the future if you don't have some kind of mechanism that takes into account the changing population and the rapid growth of Brampton which is anticipated in the coming years.

My principal criticism of this bill is that before long, almost but not quite before we actually see the implementation and the impact of this bill at the time of the 2006 elections, almost at the same time as the bill actually becomes effective and we see the practical consequences of it, it will be well on its way to being out of date, and we will be under the same pressure as legislators to begin the cycle all over again, this time listening to complaints that may well be perfectly justified, and probably will be, from other people about exactly the same issue we hear about today.

I have three other criticisms I want to convey, and they relate more to the process. The first I think is a serious matter, and it was alluded to by my friend the member for Niagara—what is it? Lincoln?

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** Erie-Lincoln.

**Mr. Tory:** The Speaker has a little video screen up there that tells him the names of these seats. The member for Erie-Lincoln talked—

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Tattle-tale.

**Mr. Tory:** I apologize. We're not supposed to let on about these things. I've got to learn that too, I guess—the code of silence that exists on these matters.

My friend the member from Erie-Lincoln referred this afternoon to how important it is—let me put it in a positive way—that people in government, the citizens of Ontario and people who have conversations with ministers and with the Premier should be able to rely on the word of the Premier and of ministers of the government, whatever government it might be. We have in this case an almost unbelievable list and chronology of events that have taken place. Even if you just look at the past year alone, it's an almost unbelievable list of statements that have been made, positions that have been taken, e-mails sent and so forth and so on.

January 2004: Premier McGuinty says that Peel restructuring is not on the agenda.



June 2004: Mr. Sorbara, the Minister of Finance, says that there's no intention of moving forward with the restructuring of Peel region.

June 2004: Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, again confirms that no restructuring will take place in Peel region.

August 2004: Minister Gerretsen, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, says that changes must be based on consensus. There is one person who had it right.

October 2004: Mr. Gerretsen appoints Mr. Adams to try and follow through on what he said. At least there's maybe a germ of consistency in the statements made and the actions of Mr. Gerretsen.

February 2005: Premier McGuinty promises to abide by the Adams report, a promise he made at a very exclusive fundraiser held for the Liberal candidate in a by-election I'm quite familiar with. There were no media present there when he made the statement, but the gentleman in question has confirmed it in a letter that he wrote confirming a private conversation. I'm sure maybe that's why the statement was made, because it was a private conversation and there were no media at that very exclusive and only semi-successful fundraiser held at that time.

April: The McGuinty government ignores its own words, ignores the commitment to consensus, ignores Justice Adams and proceeds to introduce the legislation we're debating here today, Bill 186.

I just don't think that, in the interests of having people, whether they be municipal leaders, mayors, citizens, the media, anybody—that we can have a continuation of this say-one-thing-and-do-another kind of government. It's become really the hallmark of the McGuinty administration. I think it reduces the confidence that people can have in this system of government, I think it increases cynicism and I think it causes people to conclude that they just plain can't rely on the word of the people who are the leaders in their government. Frankly, I think it ends up being a brush that tars all of us, that people just can't rely on anything anybody in public life says.

We have the recent example here—we were discussing it earlier today—with respect to the health tax, the most famous example. I noted with interest that the citizens' coalition did not declare Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, to be a provincial promise-breaking champion; they did not declare him to be a national promise-breaking champion; they declared him to be a world champion of promise-breaking, and I want to congratulate him on that very significant recognition.

But you know what? At the end of the day, that is not the right approach to government, it is not the right approach to public life and it is not a viable approach. If we want to do something about turning around the cynicism I heard at the door when I was running to represent the people in Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, it has to start with doing what you say you're going to do, being consistent and being straightforward.

The second point of criticism is a combination of a total lack of consultation and a question that goes with that, which is, what is the rush here, anyway?

## 1530

It is interesting but it is also troubling that, on an issue as fundamental as this, the very composition and functioning of an important regional government in this province, there was never one meeting that took place between the minister and the mayors of those constituent municipalities to consult. There was one meeting that took place where the minister informed the mayors of the conclusion he had reached, which of course was entirely inconsistent with all of the history that had gone before.

I would acknowledge that leadership does mean you have to take decisions on tough issues. But it also means that you make every effort you can in the process—I think this way, in any event; clearly the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier do not—to bring the sides together behind a resolution they can all support, that you try as hard as you can to get people to buy in. Only then can you really have the kind of regional government the Premier talked about today that functions well and properly. I only wish that what he said today, about how he wants to see Peel operate, was really evidenced in the legislation and, more importantly, the approach he's taken to the legislation that's been brought forward.

In that vein, the Adams process was good, because it attempted to put people in the room and work something out. We had, as I said earlier, an objective person who came forward with his best judgment on what could be done. You would have thought that even if that process was going to be declared unsuccessful, there could have been at least one meeting that took place between the Premier and/or the minister and the three mayors, to have an open and honest discussion about this and to let people say their piece.

I think also, in this rushed process of putting this through, it deliberately ignores the fact that—heavens above, we've got some really big issues that are affecting this province where we don't get legislation put through half as quickly as this—there is a mechanism in the Municipal Act itself to provide for the change in the composition of a regional council which can be initiated by the council itself. The Municipal Act, 2001, which was effective on January 1, 2003, was meant to reduce precisely the kind of provincial paternalism that we heard the members opposite complaining about earlier today. It caused more of these decisions to be initiated and made by the municipal governments themselves, by the people elected to serve the people who live in those constituencies, instead of having them made here at Queen's Park.

Even in this case, steps had been taken to initiate a locally initiated change to the composition of Peel regional council in the manner intended by section 218 of the Municipal Act. Section 218 intends for those changes to be studied, to be transparent, to be democratic and to be locally driven—absolutely none of which we get with Bill 186. There have been no studies aside from the Adams exercise. There has been no transparency, in that this decision to bring this bill forward was made in

secret, behind closed doors in the cabinet room, without any consultation. There hasn't been a hint of democracy aside from the fact that we will have a vote in this chamber on the legislation perhaps tomorrow and then, later on, on third reading. There has been no involvement of the duly elected representatives, either the mayors or the councillors, and there has been no other local involvement in terms of allowing the people to really have their say, aside from a very minimal amount of public consultation.

This matter, astonishing as it may seem, has never been before the Peel council in a formal way to have a kind of discussion about a specific proposal, including this bill itself. I would have thought that, for no other reason than obtaining input from the councillors and mayors, the Premier or the minister would have wanted to spend an hour or two with the people making up the council to explore their views.

We have a bill here which, first, bypasses the statutory provision that is put in place with the express purpose of dealing with this kind of issue; second, a government which, in introducing the legislation, has totally passed up the opportunity to consult with the Peel council itself; and third, a government which has totally passed up the opportunity to engage in any consultation whatsoever with the local mayors, the elected mayors, before deciding.

On top of all of that, we have the government proceeding with unseemly haste to push this bill through, a bill which will not actually have practical effect until 2006. So it could have been allowed to go out for some meaningful public consultation if the government had any interest in that kind of consultation. There would be absolutely nothing lost. Nothing would be affected by allowing some meaningful public consultation on this bill, some time to listen to the mayors, the councillors and the citizens. Nothing would change; nothing would be lost. It means that, maybe a month later, two months later, a kernel or two of an odd good idea might have come forward. Then nothing would change in terms of the composition of the Legislature. Everything could proceed, but at least people would feel their voices could be heard.

I would say to you that the one day of hearings that we're getting, divided into two parts—something we had to fight hard to get—really isn't the kind of meaningful consultation that we should get. I want to say to the House, the Premier and the minister that I just don't think this is right. This is not the way to engender confidence among the public in the way that we're governing.

I think we have to take some time, especially here, in an instance where we have some time, to ensure that people think they can be heard and that there is maybe just a chance that they will be heard. At least they would think that they're being listened to. It's no wonder people are cynical about politicians and politics when they see this kind of thing, where there is no urgency in getting it done this week or next week—or this month or next month, for that matter—and they see no opportunity for themselves to be heard.

I want to say to the mayors, all three of them, including Mayor McCallion, for whom I have immense respect, that if I have the privilege of becoming Premier of this province, I will not do that. I will not do that kind of thing. I will not impose a solution to a problem like this without consultation. I will not impose a solution to a problem like this without engaging in meaningful consultation. Only as an absolute last resort would you ever come in and do something, and in this case, it's being done as a first resort. Let me repeat what I said for your benefit: I said I would not impose a solution like this without proper—

**The Acting Speaker:** I apologize for interrupting. I would ask the government members to refrain from heckling the Leader of the Opposition so that he can make his points. I can't hear him.

**Mr. Tory:** I would only say that if various shoes were on various other feet, I expect we'd be hearing a lot more about this lack of consultation.

The last point I want to make is this, and it's kind of a question: What is really going on here? Well, there has been a great deal of speculation about what this really means. Is this really the first step in the dismantling of Peel region? The government hasn't said so. It hasn't said it is, it hasn't said it isn't, and that's what's troubling about this. But then again, they haven't said a lot of things as they've made their way to Bill 186. They've had all these inconsistent positions, and, of course, that's consistent with their history on just about every other issue.

Let's look at the history here. The process we have seen over and over again from this Premier and from this government is very troubling, and I think it could easily lead to the conclusion that there is another agenda. Promises were made about a referendum and the results of a referendum held elsewhere in the province in Kawartha Lakes by Mr. McGuinty—promises not kept. Promises were made in this instance about Peel restructuring by Mr. McGuinty, promises which have not been kept.

When you see a process like this—no consultation, a failure to follow legislation already in place, a long list of broken promises, not even a simple meeting with the duly elected mayors of the municipalities involved and then basically junking the heart of a report written by an objective third party, the only non-politician of the lot—then you do have to wonder what is really going on here.

Mayor McCallion has said—and heaven knows, with her, you know where you stand. I have a few scars to show for that, and I say that in an affectionate kind of way. But she says, and I quote from the *Toronto Star*, "Eventually, regional government will be gone in Peel region. It has outlived its usefulness."

Mayor McCallion is not one for a hidden agenda—I will give her full marks for that—but if there is one that goes beyond rectifying the problem that she and others have identified with respect to representation by population in Peel region, then the government of Ontario owes it to the people to say so. If this really is the first step, if the real agenda here is to dismantle Peel region,



then the government should have the honesty and the straightforwardness to put that issue on the table and to get on with debating that, saying that's what we're going to debate and we're going to have an open and honest debate about it and be straightforward with people. But to back in to such a fundamental decision as this and not put the issue squarely on the table in a straightforward manner, to go through this non-consultative, non-respectful of the existing statutory provision kind of route that this government has taken, I think, is just not right.

So to conclude, we shouldn't create a new problem in the course of solving an old one. We should consult using existing statutory mechanisms and using the prestige of the minister and the Premier's office to cause people to come together and to work together to fashion a solution. If you appoint an objective third party to look at this, you should heed their advice. You shouldn't throw their report into the trash can and ignore it. If you have a broader agenda on the question of regional government in Peel, then speak up and say what it is. I would say to you, by way of a concluding statement, what we should be doing, I would respectfully suggest, is to ask—and I am asking—one last time that this bill be sent out for meaningful consultation. There is no rush. We should let the people have their say and be a participant in reforming their government.

1540

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** It was a pleasure to listen to the leader of the official opposition on this particular topic. He gave a very careful historical analysis of what has led up to today, all of the changes, all of the very clear flip-flops that emanated from the Premier's office, all of the statements that were once made that are now recanted.

You know something? What he didn't talk about, and which I feel compelled to in the two minutes I have, is how this very carefully follows exactly the same actions of one Mr. Al Leach, who was once the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. They've done exactly the same thing. Just as Mr. Leach did with all the amalgamations, they first of all promised consultations, but no consultations took place. Then they asked the mayors and the councils for alternatives, and when the alternatives were given, they were all dismissed. Then they ignored all the recommendations from the learned people who came forward with recommendations, and I'll tell you, that's exactly what this minister has done as well. Then when all that's done, they start to attack the mayors and the councillors. They talk about fiefdoms; they talk about protection. Then, last but not least, they impose their own solution, which was not even on the radar screen when all this started.

I have to tell you, at least Mr. Guy Giorno has had the guts to say the Conservatives were wrong. I want to wait for the minister to say you're wrong too, because just as clearly as they were wrong for the amalgamations, you are wrong in this. I don't know what else to expect, when you see what happened in Kawartha Lakes—even in Kawartha Lakes where the people democratically voted

to take their city and their county back. You have ignored that. You have gone against the democratic wishes of the people, and I'm not surprised you're going against the democratic wishes of the people of these three wonderful municipalities.

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** The job of government is to solve problems, and one problem that needs to be solved is the inequity of the representation on Peel regional council. About two-thirds of Peel region's population lives in Mississauga, but only 48% of Peel region's council is allocated to Mississauga. Mississauga is growing rapidly toward a population of about 800,000, up from its current 680,000. Mississauga is already bigger than Brampton is forecast to ever be. If we allocated Peel region council's seats based on population, based on 50,000 to 55,000 per seat, Mississauga would have 12 seats, just what Bill 186 proposes; Brampton would have 7 seats, just what Bill 186 proposes; Caledon would have one seat, not the five that Bill 186 proposes. Ontario has never allocated representation on the basis of population that has never taken place, and if you think British Columbia's single transferable vote system is hard to understand, it's nothing compared to the weighted representation scheme proposed by Justice Adams.

The member from Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey is showing himself to be a serial ditherer. In order for Mississauga to add two new wards to the city, we need to get this bill passed before the end of this session. In my northwest corner of Mississauga, my Ward 9 councillor, Pat Saito, already represents more people than the Premier of the province of Prince Edward Island. Maybe John and the Tories don't believe in representation by population, but I do. So do 680,000 people of Mississauga—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member from Mississauga West to make reference to the member by his riding name or his title as leader of the opposition, not by his first name.

**Mr. Delaney:** Maybe the member from Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey doesn't believe in representation by population, but I do, and so do the 680,000 people of Mississauga, the heart—

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Hudak:** The more Mississauga West talks, the more nonsense comes from across the floor. What a bunch of horse feathers we just heard from Mississauga West. Give me a break. You talk about proportional representation, but the only act that your Attorney General brought forward on provincial boundaries rejects that principal. It rejects that principal. But out of convenience, because you want to make this change, you raise an argument, and then on the other hand, they do the opposite when it comes to provincial boundaries.

There's a word that starts with "h"—hypo-something or other—that would describe it, but I can't use that, Mr. Speaker, in the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker:** And you can't say indirectly what you can't say directly. I would ask the member to withdraw that particular statement.

**Mr. Hudak:** Withdrawn, Mr. Speaker.

What we saw today was instructive. We see in the gallery Mayor McCallion on one side, Mayor Fennell and Mayor Morrison on the other. We see a good number of taxpayers from Peel who are here today and a number of councillors. A divide on Peel council has been created by Dalton McGuinty, his dithering, his indecisiveness and his series of broken promises. This legislation, by creating a deadlocked council, is going to exacerbate that great divide. You are going to turn what has been a model regional council into a model of Dalton McGuinty himself: indecisive, dithering and unable to make substantial decisions.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm going to have to say to you as well that you've got to refer to the other members of the House by their riding name or by the fact that he's the Premier, but not his first name.

**Mr. Hudak:** Fair enough.

I'm one who is proud of the remarks of our leader, the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, today. He told us where he stood on the issue and had the right answer. If you truly wanted to improve Peel region, to improve the services to taxpayers, you would work with all three municipalities and forge a consensus solution, not this misguided piece of legislation that they're boasting about today.

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale):** I want to start by thanking the people of Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. I'm proud to represent them at Queen's Park.

My riding has a part of Mississauga and a part of Brampton. I have held two public meetings, one in Bramalea and one in Malton. The people of my riding have told me, and I have listened to them. They have spoken their minds, they have spoken from their guts and they have spoken their hearts to me. They have told me that Bill 186 is not fair to the people of Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. It does not really represent them. What they are looking for is fairness in representation in the Peel region, from Brampton as well as Mississauga.

The people of Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale have told me that I represent them fully, and I'm accountable to them. If this bill goes through, this will not give fair representation to Brampton, as well as to Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale. I definitely want to listen to the people of my riding. I am committing myself to vote against Bill 186.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Tory:** I want to acknowledge the comments of the member opposite and the member for Brampton Centre, who both have followed along, finally—maybe; I'll believe it when I see it—allowing another of the McGuinty promises to be kept, that of allowing members to speak and to vote in accordance with the wishes of their constituents from time to time.

It's interesting. There are people here well beyond the members of municipal government, and I don't discount them for a minute: the past presidents of the Brampton Board of Trade, Brian Dawson, Mike Collins, Heather

Picken; Bill Burrell and George Burrows—I gather he's better referred to as “Potsy”—Brampton's citizen of the year, 2005, people who are leading community citizens, who have come here today to talk about this.

I heard the member earlier from the New Democratic Party talking about—again, I don't know the name of your riding.

**Mr. Prue:** Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Tory:** Beaches–East York. Thank you very much. I'll learn these in due course, or I'll get one of those TV screens.

You know what? I would argue with him that two or three wrongs don't make a right. We still have a chance to do the right thing in this instance. It is good government we're looking for here. The member for Mississauga West will be sitting here in a few months wondering how the regional government in Peel could be operating way worse than it is today, because they will have created such dysfunction with what they've done.

**1550**

There is no need whatsoever to pass this bill urgently in this session, as the member for Mississauga West suggested. I can tell you right now that we will give you an outside date this calendar year by which we will commit to having this bill voted on in third reading. It may be amended a little because you will have actually listened to some people. We'll give you an outside date if you refer this bill out for some meaningful consultation with the people and the mayors and so on, and if you use the prestige of the minister's office and the Premier's office to cause these mayors to sit together with the Premier and the minister and fashion a solution. If you did that, that would be real leadership. That would be good government. We don't see much of that. Step forward and do that, make us proud that you can actually provide some good government and some real consultation, and we'll vote on the bill with you before the end of this year. Do it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

Mr. Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a document from the chief government whip asking that the vote be deferred until tomorrow at the time for deferred votes.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Simcoe–Grey has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Transportation concerning the realign-



ment of Highway 26. This matter is scheduled to be debated today at 6 p.m.

## MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Ms. Pupatello, on behalf of Mr. Gerretsen, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 /  
Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les  
municipalités.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll now look to the government side for a leadoff speech in debate on Bill 92.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** We came to office as a government determined to work in a different way. Our approach was, and is, to work with the people of Ontario, with the municipal governments they elect and with business and community associations on the challenges that confront us all. In our view, the best way to achieve progress is to involve all those who have a stake in the outcome and enlist them to help us chart our communal path forward.

Take our approach to establishing a permanent greenbelt to halt urban sprawl and ensure protection of sensitive lands and natural resources. Creating a greenbelt is a complex and delicate task. It's more than just drawing some lines on a map. We have to assemble and assimilate all the relevant information in terms of land use, development and growth. We have to put this information into a context of what is really happening and what is poised to happen on the ground in the Golden Horseshoe.

In this region, there are many areas that are highly sensitive from an environmental standpoint. It has significant reserves of agricultural lands that are important both for their potential as well as their current uses. The Golden Horseshoe is a reservoir of significant headwaters, water systems and water resources. It can also claim huge assets of natural resources both above and beneath the ground.

Nowhere is this competition more keenly felt than in the Golden Horseshoe. It's the economic engine not only of Ontario but the whole country. It is also the preferred destination for the majority of immigrants to this country. It has experienced unprecedented growth over the past few decades, and that growth pressure is increasing unabated.

In the fall of 2003, the Premier began working on fulfilling our government's platform commitment to establish a Golden Horseshoe greenbelt. The intent was to bring together protections that were already in place, such as those for the Niagara Escarpment or the Oak

Ridges moraine, and to add other areas to form a continuous, protected swath around existing centres of development.

The greenbelt would protect and preserve valuable natural heritage and agricultural systems and curb sprawl. It would benefit the economic and environmental health of the region and would maintain natural and recreational areas for the enjoyment of a growing population.

To allow time to create the greenbelt, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing brought in legislation and used other legal measures to hold the line on further urban encroachment on key rural and agricultural lands. The moratorium on development gave the government the time to consider policies and approaches that would lead to permanent greenbelt protection.

One of the essential ways we used this time was to consult. We wanted to reach out to the people most affected by the proposed greenbelt and get their views on how to best make it work. This was a meticulous and comprehensive consultation. It began in February 2004, when the Minister of Municipal Affairs appointed the Greenbelt Task Force—

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm here today to participate in the debate on Bill 92. The member is not conforming with standing order 23(b), where she's supposed to specifically address the memorandum of understanding which is the substance of Bill 92. I'd ask you to rule on that.

**The Acting Speaker:** I appreciate the contribution of all members of this House. I'm listening intently to the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and I believe she is speaking to the matter at hand.

Member?

**Mrs. Van Bommel:** Thank you for your ruling, Speaker.

As I was saying, our consultation with municipalities and with the people of those municipalities began in February 2004, when the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing appointed the Greenbelt Task Force, chaired by Burlington Mayor Rob MacIsaac. Made up of stakeholder representatives and experts in various fields, the task force had two main jobs: one was to develop principles and directions for the greenbelt, and the other was to consult with stakeholders and the public before finalizing its advice to the minister. The task force convened public consultation meetings and stakeholder workshops. It also conducted three phases of increasingly detailed discussions with municipalities. Altogether, the task force heard from more than 1,200 people and received more than 1,000 submissions. More than 60 stakeholder groups were represented.

In August 2004, the Greenbelt Task Force presented its advice and recommendations to the minister.

Additional consultations with stakeholders and the public took place during the fall and winter of 2004. Staff of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing presented the draft plan and the draft map to more than 3,500 people at public consultation sessions held throughout the greenbelt and Golden Horseshoe areas.

1600

Interest in the greenbelt was high. More than 81,000 visits were recorded during this time on the government's greenbelt Web site. In addition, more than 1,100 written submissions were received and more than 2,000 electronic surveys were submitted. The minister met with many municipalities, planning officials and regional chairs. I mention this initiative at some length. It is a shining example of the value we place on consultation and the lengths we go to to ensure that all who want to have their say are heard from.

The record will show that when it comes to consultation, we have no lessons to learn from the members of the opposition. I would ask Ontarians to compare our record of public consultation with the previous government's record of downloading on to municipalities.

There are other examples that I could also mention: the consultation that went into our rural plan or the collaborative work we did with the Ontario municipalities and the federal government on the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund. They will amply demonstrate how we go out and get the input of citizens, municipalities and stakeholders. Consultation is at the heart of this bill that the government is bringing forward for third reading consideration today.

Since our government came to power, building better relationships with municipalities has been a key priority. Our shared goal is to provide stronger, safer communities that work for the people who live there, and to help them provide the highest quality of life for all the people of Ontario. Our municipal-provincial relationship is better than it has been in years.

With the support of the Legislature, this amendment would commit the province to consult with municipalities. It would be done in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. This amendment, if passed, will mean real, positive change for the people of Ontario in how their local and provincial governments interact for the benefit of all.

Consultation is at the core of the close working relationship with the province's municipalities that the province of Ontario is forging. It is a relationship based on respect for each other. When our government came to power, we made a commitment to do things differently. Under our strong communities priority, we set about building better relationships with municipalities than this province has seen in many years, and we have introduced changes that demonstrate the trust and confidence that we have in our municipal leaders.

This new approach is reflected in many of the actions that we have taken to date, such as the revamping of the northern Ontario prosperity plan or our comprehensive review of the Ontario Municipal Act, 2001, or the additional investments we've made that will benefit municipalities, for example, in education and public health costs. These are some of the results of our new relationship with Ontario's local communities and their elected governments.

Of course, you can't tap into local expertise if you're not prepared to listen. So we've started out with a commitment to create this new working partnership by listening, by valuing municipal input and by acting on what municipalities have told us. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, or AMO, as it's more commonly known, can trace its roots back more than 100 years.

Collectively, AMO members represent a great resource of experience and knowledge in municipal administration. That's what makes AMO such a valuable partner for the Ontario government. We often call upon AMO's members to advise and help in assessing new provincial programs or policy proposals. AMO members serve as a built-in working group and expert panel past which we can fly new government programs and draft policies. Both sides gain by this relationship.

Working with AMO members gives us a local perspective that helps the government refine its proposals and tailor its responses to local needs and conditions.

It is our stakeholders' input that is most effective. Programs that will have an impact at the local level are shaped with the help of the local level. In program development and fine-tuning, this local input and local experience is irreplaceable.

Given the positive outcomes that we have experienced, it's no wonder that we want to recognize in law this way of doing business. We are striving for the best of both worlds: We want to make sure that programs and policies are aimed at making life better at the local level and that they actually do deliver that, and we want to give local elected representatives the chance to work with us in the best interests of their citizens to make government programs the best that they can be. That's the essence of the relationship that the province has with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. That's why we want to ensure that this is the way the province and the local level continue to operate and to co-operate for years to come.

That's why we've introduced Bill 92, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001. This bill would amend the Municipal Act, 2001, to recognize in legislation the memorandum of understanding between the provincial government and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. It firmly establishes our new approach to the relationship between Ontario and its municipal governments. With the support of the Legislature, it will firm up our promise to consult with local communities and their elected representatives on matters that will have significant local impact. It represents a fair and inclusive approach to program and policy development. If passed, this proposed amendment would give local municipal governments more of a voice in designing initiatives that affect them.

As a government, we are striving to make Ontario the place to be—the place with the best educated, most highly skilled people, the healthiest people and the most prosperous and forward-looking society. We build that vision from the ground up with the support and input of our citizens and their governments at the local level.



We now have monthly meetings with municipal representatives, and these meetings have a very full agenda. These meetings put cabinet ministers in front of municipal leaders for full and frank exchanges of ideas and views. These meetings are very productive and have assisted our government in refining our policies to help make Ontario's communities stronger.

We believe in giving local municipal leaders a voice when decisions are being made that affect them and their communities. Our consultation process is truly a two-way street: We consult with municipalities on emerging policies and also encourage municipal representatives to raise issues that they think need addressing.

This new spirit of consultation and partnership also shows itself in practical ways at the program level. An excellent example of this is our Ontario municipal partnership fund. This new fund is a fairer, more transparent funding model than the community reinvestment fund that it replaces. It will represent the province's largest transfer of payment to municipalities for 2005 and beyond. Our new program is greatly improved, thanks to our consultation with municipal representatives.

The OMPF will provide \$656 million to 386 municipalities in Ontario, an increase of \$38 million, or 6.1% more than the amount the community reinvestment fund provided to municipalities last year. Our OMPF goes a long way toward addressing what municipalities told us were major irritants and inequities in the complex and outdated CRF model.

The new OMPF represents another important milestone in the relationship between the province and its municipal partners. The new program will assist municipalities with their social program costs, it will provide assessment equalization to those municipalities with limited property tax assessment bases, it will respond to policing costs in rural communities, and it recognizes the unique challenges facing northern and rural communities.

**1610**

The new Ontario municipal partnership fund illustrates that our new way of consulting and working in partnership is paying off. The essence of a stronger provincial-municipal relationship is no surprises—and we want to consult. As part of our Strong Communities initiative, our government has made a strong commitment to consult with municipalities on changes to legislation and regulations that affect municipal budgets in a significant way. That was the basis for the memorandum of understanding that was agreed to within the association of municipalities, which the Premier signed, along with the former chair of AMO, Ann Mulvale, in Ottawa in August 2004. We strengthened that commitment by adding a protocol to the memorandum of understanding to ensure that the province consults with municipalities on federal-provincial matters that have a direct municipal impact.

This agreement has guided our actions and informed our dealings with our municipal partners. But we wanted to take this even further. We sought to make it a law that consultation should take place, shaped by the terms of an agreed-upon MOU. Preparing to take this next step

brings us here today. As members may recall, the memorandum of understanding is not recognized in the Municipal Act, 2001. But we, as a government, feel this is such a valuable and rewarding approach that it should be. That is why last year the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing introduced for first reading Bill 92, an Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001.

The people of Ontario are better served when all governments work together. Jointly, we can create and implement better policies and better programs and deliver better services to our shared constituents. With the support of this House, we will be able to move forward with our commitment to consult and co-operate. This amendment, if passed, will ensure that this local contact on consultations takes place. It will take what is a best practice and enshrine it as a legal principle. It will mean real change for the people of Ontario in how their local and provincial governments interact for the benefit of all.

Local governments are the ones best able to help us determine how to respond to local conditions. This bill, if passed, will formalize the process of seeking their advice and expertise. It would recognize that they have a vital contribution to make and should have a say in decisions with which they and their residents have to live. So I ask the members of this assembly to join me in voting for Bill 92.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate?

**Mr. O'Toole:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Bill 92. I certainly did listen to the remarks of the last speaker. It was a very well-written speech and, I might say, a well-read speech, prepared by the ministry staff, as it should be, because they are trying to communicate a message here. You would know, Mr. Speaker, that they are not really allowing the democratic process to develop as they promised during the election.

This afternoon, in the limited time I have, will try to address the litany and tragedy of broken promises as they apply to one minister; in this case, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and, I might also say, the minister responsible for public infrastructure renewal; they're somewhat overlapping jurisdictions.

With your indulgence, Bill 92—I might say I'm looking at all the legislation here and I will be referring to the specific legislation—is less than a third of a page, because it's written in both official languages, and that's it, for the viewer there. It's very small. In fact, this bill was a commitment made by the government to formalize the tradition of the consultation process with the people of Ontario.

I'll read the purpose clause here: "The province of Ontario endorses the principle of ongoing consultation between the province and municipalities in relation to matters of mutual interest and, consistent with this principle, the province shall consult with municipalities in accordance with a memorandum of understanding entered into between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario."

You should know that this was introduced in June 2004. On six separate occasions, the opposition—the

member from Erie–Lincoln as well as the member from Nepean–Carleton—have stood in this House and asked for that order to be called. They have been refused. They didn't want to discuss it, because most of their changes to the municipal relationship, which I will get to, were quite staggering amendments to existing relationship provisions.

That started with the original Planning Act; I think it was the Planning Act reform, Bill 26, which is now the law. This was the very obvious provision which exempted all of the planning hierarchy that had developed over the last two decades or so. What it did was allow the minister to express an interest in a specific area for a provincial interest. So it overwrote all of the understandings passed by local official plans and regional or county-level official plans. It centralized and became a long, very arduous course, deliberately chosen, navigated, to the point where all decisions—and I'll demonstrate this in the four or five bills I'm going to talk about—were being made in the Premier's office.

Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario, ran on the ticket of democratic renewal. What we have now is a government where all the decisions are made in cabinet or by the minister himself, with very little consultation with the people of Ontario. Yes, the word "consultation" was used frequently by the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, who just spoke. I still wish that Marcel Beaubien were here, but that's the way it is.

In the consultations she referred to, the only difference was yesterday. If persons want to log on to the Ontario Web site on the standing committee that met yesterday to deal with Bill 136—Bill 136 is the Places to Grow bill, which is really a planning bill talking about infrastructure. We moved, I believe, about 10 amendments. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you would not be surprised to learn that they never adopted one single amendment.

One of the amendments was dealing with public transit. For one of the amendments, which is part of infrastructure renewal—I would hope, public transit—it appears the government was not interested in bringing forward any input with respect to public infrastructure renewal as it applies to transit. The NDP moved an amendment to try to improve the development of infrastructure as it applies to the distribution of electricity. The parliamentary assistant, Mr. Rinaldi—I'm trying to find his location here—actually read the notes very dutifully as the parliamentary assistant, as he should, but they just ignored them completely.

Bill 92 purports to recommend a memorandum of understanding with municipalities, which would respect the decision of those locally elected and constitutionally involved under municipal law. They are constitutionally created by the province under the Municipal Act, and I am going through just the first one, which was Bill 26, as I said.

The next one, so there's some continuity here, that I'm going to talk about is Bill 135, the greenbelt legislation. I'm also going to refer to this consultation process, or lack thereof, on Bill 136, which is Places to Grow, as

well as the more current debate that occurred here and was voted on today, Bill 186, the Regional Municipality of Peel Act.

**1620**

Here are the acts I wanted to bring forward: Bill 135, An Act to establish a greenbelt area and to make consequential amendments to the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 and the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994.

This bill is now law. I can tell you, in my own riding the consultations that Mrs. Van Bommel attended in Durham were an outrage. The people of Ontario were offended by two provisions of that very onerous piece of legislation: the plight of agriculture today and the expropriation issue without any form of consultation at all. They were just greenbelted out of existence. Also the inability to find any redress. There's no appeal process. So the consultation ends when the minister signs.

I can tell you, in my own riding and indeed in Durham region and I know elsewhere, as the member from Erie–Lincoln has most admirably pointed out, there are a number of anomalies and exceptions. Those consultations, despite the democratic renewal rhetoric I hear from the government, are being discussed behind closed doors—not by elected people, in many cases, but by civil servants who are going to treacherously manipulate the boundaries.

In fact, the treachery of all that—and this is the consultation. There was a gala held at an estate in York region. It was \$10,000 a plate. The mayor of Pickering was there at the trough, provided with the ticket by one of the developers, to gerrymander some of the boundaries that, prior to the bill being passed, were out and, after the bill, were in. I know that the same is happening in other areas in my own riding. I believe it's a process that should occur and is occurring, but again, it's under the cloak of darkness.

It's in that context that even they have to come, cap in hand, to acquiesce with or access the minister to get small, logical amendments to the boundaries. Part of that was an open process. Some would disagree with the process, but at least the official plan and the public consultation at the municipal level have been somewhat terminated. So goes the memorandum of understanding.

I have to put it in context here. What this purpose clause that I read said was that they would have a formal agreement to consult, and we're just dealing with it now. It's been on the books since 2004—very early 2004, I might say. So Bill 135 was one of the bills they just ignored.

Now, you know why they didn't want to deal with Bill 92. It's because they then had another bill they had to get through before they went back to the consultation process, the memorandum of understanding. Bill 136 is An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans. This is what I call micromanagement, a centralized theory of planning. I remember in my university days studying the central place theory of plan-



ning. It was called the Christaller central place theory. In that, planning was done centrally, and I suspect in some areas, like public transit and certainly provincial roads, there needs to be a central plan. My purpose here is to make sure that the duly elected local and regional councillors, whether in Peterborough or Pembroke or Perth, all have access to the process. But no, no, if you look at this bill, in all cases the minister ultimately decides.

I'll just read one thing. "Contents of plan" is on page 3 of the legislation. We tried to change this. They are going to dictate the intensification, the density, the land supply, the expansions, the location of industry and commerce, the protection of sensitive and significant lands, non-renewable resources, infrastructure, transportation, municipal waste, the coordination of planning development among municipalities, growth-related capital expenditures, affordable housing, community design, and there's one catch-all, what I call the Henry VIII clause, which is all other things that the minister shall consider.

It's the provision of this all-encompassing, omniscient kind of wisdom of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the secret cabinet documents. That's consultation? I think not.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member—I'm trying to find where he's from. I should know that, actually; from Northumberland.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** Good member.

**Mr. O'Toole:** He's a very good member, yes—read well the notes that were well prepared—but even he, as a previous mayor, knows that they pretty well exempted any functionality in planning with respect to the municipal lower-tier level of government. Who is closer to the people than the municipally elected person? I can say that the member from Northumberland served well as the member from Brighton, and I would say that the member from Peterborough served on council. They must be sitting in tears now, heartbroken by the years they put into these official plans, and now the minister with a stroke of a pen—the centralized theory, Bill 136—you can tell them where you are siting your transit, everything. It's heartbreaking.

But it doesn't end there. There's more to it, in the little time I have been allocated here today. The more recent debate in the House has got to be troubling, and I hope stirs the members of the government to real consideration of legislation. What I mean by that is that Bill 186 is An Act respecting the composition of the council of the Regional Municipality of Peel. That is very controversial, and our leader, John Tory—Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey—spoke today to several interruptions of applause, some from the gallery, from Hazel McCallion and the mayors of Peel region; you might know that Caledon is part of his riding. I'm also impressed that there are members on the government side, and I am going to put their names on the record out of respect for their careful consideration here, who are considering voting against the government. What this is is a death knell for them. This is how it works: Strike three, you're out. Linda

Jeffrey, the member for Brampton Centre, who was actually Chair of the committee yesterday —

**The Acting Speaker:** I realize that the member for Durham is mentioning the member's riding name, but I would ask him not to use her surname.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Thank you for that. You have a television screen, so it's a lot easier, but members who are listening—and the member from Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale as well, I think. Missing in action here were a couple of members—the member from Brampton West—Mississauga. I am a little concerned on his position. There's some ambivalence emerging there. I will be making sure there is a recorded vote on this, and they will be distributed appropriately at a certain time and place.

But when you have three members of the government who have all to gain by conforming to the wishes of the whip and to the Dalton McGuinty know-it-all cabinet, their futures are somewhat at risk. I know them to be good and honourable members, but I admire them for their standing up for the right thing.

But what has happened, and the points have been made very clear today by the member from Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey, does nothing but create a stalemate. In fact, you would be wise to know that Justice Adams was convened to do consultations; not the government, not the elected people but Justice Adams. That's like throwing it over the fence, in hopes that they come back. Also, when they throw it over the fence, they probably give him the answer they want, so the report complements the work. What happened was, and this might be of interest to you, that Justice Adams's report to recognize the formula for growth was not adopted. What a disappointment to all three mayors. They have solved nothing.

If you want to look at how important democratic renewal is in that broader debate of memoranda of understanding, of consultations, of conformance with due process: During the election, the leader now of the government, the government of dithering and withering, committed to recognize the city of Kawartha Lakes. They tried to recognize the city of Kawartha Lakes with a referendum on their amalgamation or de-amalgamation. It was controversial, as all amalgamations are. Cities, towns and villages and their history are extremely important. Certainly Victoria county in the city of Kawartha Lakes today, and Lindsay—there's been much, much controversy over the years. The Premier clearly indicated that he would respect the referendum that was duly constituted and held during the election, municipally, and then he threw it out the window.

1630

**Mr. Rinaldi:** What did you guys do, John?

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member for Northumberland has interrupted, and for those viewing I'm going to put it on the record. What did you promise to do, member for Northumberland? That's the question. That is the question you have prevaricated on and, in many cases, not been straightforward about with the people of Ontario.

You're the government. You are winning every single vote you put forward. We understand that. As members of the opposition, it's our duty, indeed our privilege and in fact our responsibility, to point out frailties, as I've done with Bills 26, 135, 136, and 186, which is the current topic of my consideration.

When you look at the history—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. O'Toole:** The member for Peterborough has just brought up an interesting thing. I hope he follows the debate through time. He may recall the formation of the municipal restructuring in our own time as government. He may also recall how that developed over time. It is important to learn from history or you're doomed to repeat it.

That whole debate about municipal restructuring really culminated in two reports. I don't want to veer off into a technical discussion, but for the sake of history it's important to recognize that there were a couple of reports. One was the Fair Tax Commission—the disentanglement report. They talked about what revenue from tax paid for what service, and then they looked at the service capacity and the tax capacity of lower-tier and upper-tier municipalities. They finally realized that some areas in the province's organized and unorganized territories did not have the revenue to support certain levels of service. There's much to be made about that. All three governments, including the NDP, tried to address the restructuring, and all failed to deal with it.

What happened? Out of that discussion, when they got wind that there were changes, there was a report issued called the four mayors' report. The four mayors were from the rich municipalities that felt they could exit from regional government and make it on their own.

One of the authors of the report was Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga: rich; new infrastructure; lots of revenue from the airport; fell into a golden bucket; lots of tax revenue; big commercial-industrial tax base, including the airport; provided no services, got all the revenue, including development charges; had all new sewers and pipes; no decaying infrastructure. They were absolutely loaded. Revenue was going up twice as fast as expenditures.

A second one was Mayor Mel. Mayor Mel saw the same thing, that they had all the industrial-commercial tax base. For those laypersons listening, a municipality that has a tax base dependent totally on residential tax has a very difficult time providing the level of service you would see in Toronto. In my riding, most of it would have an industrial-commercial tax base of under 15%. Many of the rural members here would know that issues of standards of service are extremely complicated. That means that if you have no tax base—guess what?—when you look at the municipal budgets, be careful what you're doing because most of the budget is wages and benefits, and policing is the biggest part. Emergency services—ambulance, all those—are the fastest rising. Ultimately, if you look at that agenda, the goal is to have one pay scale for all emergency service workers, whether it's police,

fire or ambulance. Your budgets municipally and your house are going to go up considerably.

The city of Toronto has a \$458-million shortfall this year. I can tell you that every municipality in the province is raising taxes. What are the taxes for? They're for high salaries and benefits, and for early retirements. The OMERS problem is the age-old problem. The OMERS contribution had been forgiven because of a surplus condition in their pension funds. Now there isn't one, so the employer is paying their contribution, into what? An employee benefit, which is a negotiated, reasonable thing, but when you look at your municipal tax bill, if you're a senior on fixed income, get ready for the 10% tax increases annually.

The Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act brought to your attention the importance of this issue, because the pages of the \$100,000-plus are growing—not getting smaller, but growing—because now their comparators, rather than being just a small village like Hastings, are Mississauga. They're all rising to the highest tier. The single-tier study done in Ottawa showed that all costs of amalgamation rise to the highest level. The single-tier study from Ottawa, prior to the amalgamation of the city of Ottawa into a regional form of government, is a very important study.

What I'm trying to do here, in some kind of conclusion, is make sure that members realize how important the consultation process is. We hear that now. If you want to apply the same theory of consultation, Premier McGuinty cannot get a meeting with a Prime Minister of the same stripe—the Liberal Party. Why? Because it's about the same issue: who pays for what. It's all about transfer payments, whether it's federal, provincial, upper-tier or lower-tier: Who pays for what services and what are the transfer payments to support those service level agreements?

I can tell you that the delay in Bill 92, which sat on the order paper—we requested hearings; we requested all sorts of commitments—was no more eloquently described as essential legislation than by Roger Anderson, the chair of Durham region. I know him very well and respect the work he does. He's also the president of AMO. He appeared at the pre-budget consultations. It happened that the consultations were held across the province. I am a member of the finance and economic affairs committee, which was part of those hearings, and I do enjoy the process.

Out of respect for Roger Anderson, I'm going to read his concerns for the record. This was at Le Gala, the centre where these hearings were held on January 20, 2005. He was asked a question in the context of pre-budget consultations. He was asked to pick the top three items that would benefit from this committee's hearings. Here's what he said:

“CRF, first and foremost”—

*Interjection:* What's that?

**Mr. O'Toole:** The CRF? That's the community reinvestment fund. I can tell you that the CRF we are debating here today, which is the OMPF now—they've



changed the name, and they've changed the criteria; it's a fairer, more transparent model, blah, blah, blah. There are 47 or more municipalities that are going to receive less money, and the ones that are going to receive more are going to say it's not enough. I put to you that next year, in the phase-out period, you're actually clawing back money in that formula.

If you haven't looked at it, it's very skilfully crafted by ministry civil servants who know how this works. They're going to skate you just past the 2007 election date, and the revenue is going to be falling off the table at that time, just after the election. Most of your commitments are being phased in past 2007, like 2010 for some of this stuff—the 10-year capital plan, blah, blah, blah. It's like the federal government on Adscam; it's not to be trusted. I hate to be so blunt.

Mr Anderson said, “CRF, first and foremost; Bill 92 going through the House and giving the municipalities legislation that says the province wouldn't change rules without consulting with us; and a total 100% rebate on provincial sales tax. I don't know why we have to pay taxes to each other. It doesn't make sense.”

That's Roger Anderson on January 20, 2005. It really does make a lot of sense when you think about it. It is a case that Mr. Anderson went on to say, when asked—this again is a direct quote. I'll be giving this to Hansard so they'll get this exactly, because I intend to send this to Roger Anderson out of respect for the work I was privileged to do at the region of Durham. I suspect the member from Whitby–Ajax or whatever riding he's from—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** Somewhere out there.

**Mr. O'Toole:** No, no; I should know it. It's Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge. In fact, hopefully I'll be serving the people of Uxbridge during the next election, but that's for the future.

Here's what Mr. Anderson said in his continuing remarks: “I don't know if it's a question of consequences.... I think it's a question of, it'll be in the legislation. All parties understand the legislation. I don't know any parties that purposely go around legislation to do something. I think if it were enshrined in legislation”—meaning Bill 92—“the government of Ontario would have to meet with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. It would be good for (a) the association and (b) for all of our municipalities.”

1640

I'm continuing: “The biggest problem municipalities have is when governments make changes and don't understand all of the ramifications that could be impacted.” That has been outlined on this OMPF. For every single fund, they did it without consultation, clearly. Despite the outrage by the members of the government, you are so continuously kept in the dark that I'm surprised some of you believe what the ministers are telling you—the truncated briefing notes you get. You are only getting half of the cabinet minutes. You don't know what's happening. I think they should really pay some

attention. Demand more from Mr. Gerretsen. Demand more from Dalton. He's not straightforward with anyone, really. During the election he promised 231 things. He isn't doing any of them. Name one.

I'll get back on topic. I'm continuing here with Mr. Anderson's remarks: “I think if you knew the impact at the end before you passed the legislation, some legislation might not go through” this way.

I think that Mr. Anderson, who has a great understanding of this, having served at the municipal level—he wasn't the mayor but he certainly became the regional chair; Mr. Arthurs knows precisely what I mean—did put on the record the importance of the CRF, and we heard the same thing in Sudbury. They were outraged.

In the limited time I have left I just wanted to put on—the member from Erie–Lincoln is diligent on this file of municipal affairs; he's outstanding. His question today of the leader should be framed, because the Premier was just backing up. He was just overcome. I'm trying to describe this for the people who may not have been able to tune in: the top 10 municipal screw-ups. This is sort of like Saturday Night Live or David Letterman.

The first was the city of Kawartha Lakes; number two was forcing municipalities to deal with the Liberal pit bull legislation; number three was the cancellation of the tile drainage program; number four was the local health integration networks, with communities like Niagara opposed because they don't want major decisions for their local municipalities made by another municipality; number five is the greenbelt, Bill 135, and it goes on.

The government tried to ram this legislation through before Christmas with no consultation. Only the opposition cared enough to take up the issue of the greenbelt, that it would affect real people and their lives. Thank goodness our leader, John Tory, was there to make sure that was heard. Mapping problems: The government put together a greenbelt without even asking municipalities how it should be approached. As a result, dump sites, cemeteries and alleyways ended up classified as tender fruit lands. It's legendary errors in action.

Number seven is inconsistent logic—well, that's consistent with Liberal logic. The government keeps claiming that they listened to duly elected councils when they were making greenbelt decisions. I can tell you that they are still listening in Durham. Hopefully the government is still listening, even though the bill is passed. The Vaughan, Pickering and Grimsby official plans were ignored, absolutely ignored—rammed it through, tried to get it through before Christmas. Bill 186: The government ignored its own facilitator's recommendation and is ramming through the legislation that doesn't really make anyone happy at all. If Hazel is not happy, you'll pay the price. At the end of the day, she'll appoint the regional chair anyway.

Number nine, the 2004 CRF reallocation: The government is trying to hide the fact that it shortchanged municipal funding by including one-time funding in the figures they are publishing. This is the issue. They are pulling ahead some money for the fire department train-

ing; they are pulling ahead little pockets of money to make the current number look good, get this through and pull the carpet out from under them. They have been doing it; many governments, including probably our own, did it.

The OMPF numbers: The government is making \$47 million out of a one-time transaction with the municipal funding system. No matter where you try to hide the numbers, there is less money going forward. In a climate of growing population and inflation, these numbers are actually going to grow. The shortfall, I put to you, will be \$200 million by 2007.

I could go on, and it's in disappointment and frustration that I will be supporting Bill 92, because our leader, John Tory, believes, as he said emphatically today, that he agreed with consultation and that he agreed with supporting the consultation consensus, not picking the best three out of seven.

Honestly, there's some frustration in being in opposition, but at least it is our job to learn and to listen and to bring to the government's attention things like the travesty that has taken place here with Bill 92 being delayed so they could quickly and hastily put through planning reforms—Bill 135, Bill 136 and Bill 186—before they pass Bill 92, which is the bill that says they must consult.

There's more to be said. I can only hope that some member of our caucus will stand and take the time to put on the record the concerns of the people of their riding.

The question I put to you and leave with you is this: Are the elected members of the Liberal government, besides Mrs. Jeffrey and the others, really listening?

**Mr. Marchese:** It's a real pleasure to have an opportunity to speak to such an important bill with a great deal of substance. In fact, I would say it's so weighty that I need to read it for the record so that those of you who are watching this debate understand the full import of the bill. We're on live. It's a quarter to 5.

Here's what the bill says. It's really long too. It's one little page. It's very substantive. This is what section 1 says:

*"Consultation*

*"(1) The province of Ontario endorses the principle of ongoing consultation between the province and municipalities in relation to matters of mutual interest and, consistent with this principle, the province shall consult with municipalities in accordance with a memorandum of understanding entered into between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario."*

Then there's section 2: "This act comes into force on the day it receives royal assent."

And 3: "The short title of this act is the Municipal Amendment Act...."

That's the extent of the substance of this bill.

Do you understand, good citizens of Ontario, how important this is? Why, it's so important we devoted two days to this particular substantive bill, and with today, three days. That's how good this bill is. Good God, it needs to be debated.

I'm here to demystify this bill and to demystify the substance and to simply tell you it's an empty bill. There is nothing in the bill.

The Tories introduced this in 2001. Why did they do that? They did that because Mike Harris was a very pugilistic individual. Some people would argue he was pugnacious; some would say he was a very resolute man, unflagging in his principles.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes, pugilistic.

He was the right man for the times. Boy, he beat up the municipalities so badly that in 2001 he wanted to make amends with the municipalities, or at least pretend to make amends, by introducing this kind of bill, which he did in 2001, and then proceeded to disregard it.

Now the Liberals have reintroduced the bill because, you understand, the weight of it is so important. There's nothing in the bill. There is nothing in this bill that we're debating for three full days in this Legislature that does anything for municipalities. It does absolutely nothing. Whatever the government wants to do, it will do. If it doesn't want to consult them, it doesn't—and it didn't. I will point out a list of areas where the government didn't consult.

If the government wants to do the right thing with the municipalities, it has the power to do so; it doesn't need to pass a memorandum of understanding. If they really agree with the content, the substance, the import of this bill, why would they not have kept the promise around Kawartha Lakes?

**1650**

You will recall that, in opposition, the Liberals said that if the people of that region wanted to de-amalgamate, McGuinty would allow that. They did so through a referendum; the majority of the people said, "We want to de-amalgamate." They had a referendum a year or so ago and over 50% of the community there said, "Yes, we want to de-amalgamate." What did McGuinty say? "Too bad, so sad." That's what he told them: "Too bad, so sad. Yes, we made a promise before the election, but now we're in government, and what we said then and what we do now are two different things. So the promise we made to you folks of the Kawartha region meant nothing," as with so many other promises they have made in this Legislature.

If you want to be consistent with this memorandum, why would you not have kept this promise to give the people of Kawartha the power to de-amalgamate once it was given to them through a referendum? Why did you refuse them that right, which you had given to them prior to the election and that you so easily took away after the election? All they got was a slap in the face, more or less, a "too bad, so sad" slap in the face.

Do you see how ridiculous this bill is? When faced with the facts around so many issues, where you didn't consult, or where the communities consulted and you didn't listen, and you did the opposite of what they did and the opposite of what you promised, when that happens, these bills are a mockery of what we do and say



in this place. How can the people of Ontario trust us as politicians when you can so easily dismiss your promises and dismiss the public of Kawartha region with regard to that right they thought they had through that referendum vote?

Then there is the issue of the community reinvestment fund, which you got rid of, where you now introduce a new municipal partnership fund and you call it the new fair funding model, an equity kind of funding model. It reminded me of the Tories, where they would say, "We're cutting to make it better. We are doing more with less." It reminds me of the same kind of politics. Now the Liberals are in government and they call this new funding formula equitable or fair. All I can think of is that we are whacking communities with fairness, because so many communities are going to lose so much money from this so-called equitable partnership fund and so many of these lawyers who are in this place think it's fair.

We've got one lawyer sitting there, or about to sit over here, saying this is okay. We've got so many lawyers that I've going to mention you by name: David Zimmer from Willowdale—

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** Distinguished lawyer.

**Mr. Marchese:** —distinguished lawyer, who believes that the new fairness bill is about whacking people with fairness. I thought fairness was about two sides feeling good about the arrangement, but if you're whacking one side and saying to the other, "You're OK, you're going to get more money," but the other one is not going to get any, how can that be fair, and how could the member from Willowdale think that's good? He's a lawyer, and he's not the only lawyer in this place. Monsieur McGuinty, the Premier, is a lawyer too, and he thinks it's fair. Whacking people with fairness, in his view and McGuinty's view, is OK.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York):** Bentley's a lawyer.

**Mr. Marchese:** Bentley's another lawyer, a very prestigious, well-known—the Minister of Labour, no disrespect intended to the Chair, to the president of this Assembly, no, siree; nor to that member, no, siree. The Minister of Labour is a very well-recognized Minister of Labour. He understands issues of fairness, because he was—what?—a management-labour lawyer kind of guy. Management and labour sort of go hand in hand. His job is to sort of treat everybody fairly, right?

This particular municipal partnership fund is going to whack a whole lot of municipalities with a whole lot of fairness, and he says that's OK. He does it with a smile. He does it with all that contrivance. If you notice, the Minister of Labour, with his great legal skills, contrives and constructs an answer wherein he says very little. That's the beauty of being a lawyer: You say little or nothing, and then you say it's fair. God bless the lawyers in this assembly and God bless the lawyers outside of this place, because I suspect we'll face the same problem with them as well. But that's the new partnership fund: whacking municipalities with fairness. So they're going

to get whacked with municipal tax increases, and the Minister of Labour says, "That's OK." So what, they've got to raise municipal taxes? In his view, that's OK, that's fair.

Moving on, the Muskoka area: Six municipalities in Muskoka are taken out of the north, mysteriously, it seems. There was no explanation—not much. They unilaterally decided that Muskoka is no longer in the north. Jim, did they consult you?

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe—Grey):** No.

**Mr. Marchese:** You're sure?

**Mr. Wilson:** Yes.

**Mr. Marchese:** Because this substantive bill—you see how weighty it is?—talks about consulting. It says to the municipalities, "If we're going to do something, like whack you and treat you good, we're going to talk to you about it." Right? Well, they took Muskoka out of the north and they said, "That's fair." It's consistent with the weightiness of the bill. It's so substantive that I wanted to point out how big it is and how important it is. Muskoka is taken out of the north. As far as I know, nobody was consulted—no one.

You will argue, those of you who are fair-minded, as I do, that taking Muskoka out of the north is not consistent with the spirit of this bill. Correct, member from Willowdale?

**Mr. Zimmer:** I've got a cottage in Muskoka.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's why he's going to oppose this bill, because, good lawyer that he is, a reasonably minded individual—including the Minister of Labour, who is a good lawyer and a reasonably minded individual. They're going to vote against this bill because they have discovered in the process of being here and because they're becoming so much more experienced, that when you do things that are inconsistent, you're going to stand up on principle and say, "No," as Mr. Kormos, the member from Niagara Centre, did when we were in government. So many times he'd just say, "Man, oh, man." I remember him with a lunch bag, him and Mr. Morrow, his friend, coming to one of our caucus meetings with a lunch bag to make a point. Man, oh, man, did he beat us up on principle each and every time. And he was right; on so many issues he was right. We didn't like him, this is true, but he was right in doing a lot of the things he did. I agreed with him on the auto insurance, that we should have kept that promise, and we didn't.

That's why I believe the lawyers in this place, who are so principled, especially in the Liberal caucus, are going to vote against this bill. A number of areas that I mentioned, like Kawartha Lakes, where they broke their promise, the new municipal partnership fund, where they're whacking people with fairness, getting Muskoka out of the north without consultation, are so inconsistent with this bill, they're going to vote against it.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** You can't count on the lawyers.

**Mr. Marchese:** But if you can't count on lawyers, who are you going to count on? Who are you going to count on? We've got McGuinty, who is a lawyer;

Bentley, the Minister of Labour; Mr. Zimmer from Willowdale—all lawyers. Any other lawyers on the Liberal bench?

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** A whole bunch.

**Mr. Marchese:** A whole bunch. There are more lawyers, and they're going to vote against this bill because they're the ones with the keen minds, the discerning minds, who are able to see inconsistencies. Right? When they see those inconsistencies, they're going to say, "No, we can't put up with this. We can't stand having a double position on things." I'm just looking forward to seeing how many lawyers are going to stand up after this, when we have this bill.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** "Dissembling." I notice the clerks; they know all these words. You can't say any of the big ones, because they know them.

The municipal drainage program: unilaterally cut by the Minister of Agriculture. Did anybody consult you, Jim, from Simcoe-Grey, on that one?

**Mr. Wilson:** Which one now?

**Mr. Marchese:** The municipal drainage program.

**Mr. Wilson:** No. They took it away.

**Mr. Marchese:** It was just gone—poof.

**The Acting Speaker:** I wish I didn't have to interrupt the member for Trinity-Spadina, but I would ask the member to make his remarks through the Chair.

1700

**Mr. Marchese:** Speaker, I apologize. In the event that I wasn't looking at you when I was looking at the member from Simcoe-Grey, I apologize. You understand how I do this; I try to keep an eye on you and an eye on the rest of the assembly. I try. It's good that you point that out to me from time to time.

**Mr. Wilson:** Leave me out of your debate.

**Mr. Marchese:** You were here.

Then there's the closure of the Frost Centre. Do you remember that one?

**Mr. Wilson:** Oh, that's horrible.

**Mr. Marchese:** You remember it?

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I thought you said, "Leave me out of it."

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes, and then you reeled me back in.

**Mr. Wilson:** That's not in my area.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's it, Simcoe-Grey. He understands this issue very well, the closure of the Frost Centre. They just announced they were going to close it: "Oh, it's too expensive to maintain." This is an outdoor centre where young people—

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** It's still open.

**Mr. Marchese:** Still open? They closed—

**Mr. Wilson:** There's nothing going on there.

**Mr. Marchese:** "Closed," "Nothing going on there," and "It's being used." OK.

You remember, for a whole year, a whole lot of people demonstrating against the desire of this government to close that centre. I was out here making a couple of remarks when they came downtown to speak to this a

long while ago. Man, you've got to move mountains to get this government to listen to you. But did they consult people? Did they consult you, member from Simcoe-Grey, on that issue?

**Mr. Wilson:** No.

**Mr. Marchese:** Are you sure now?

**Mr. Wilson:** Yeah.

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm just checking, because I want to be certain.

**Mr. Wilson:** Are you about done?

**Mr. Marchese:** They were going to close this centre, the member from Simcoe-Grey reminds me, and the member from Ottawa Centre says, "No, we didn't close it." But the member from Simcoe-Grey said, as far as he knows, it's closed. And that is in his area. Correct?

**Mr. Wilson:** Next door.

**Mr. Marchese:** Next door, but pretty well there; right? He says nothing is happening. So who do you believe? I hear the member from Simcoe-Grey right here. Was the closing of the Frost Centre consistent with the weightiness of this bill? It wasn't.

The final one that I might mention is Peel governance. They hired Judge Adams. I suspect it cost them a couple of bucks; right?

*Interjection:* A few.

**Mr. Marchese:** A few; right? It's a whole lot of pecunia when you hire a judge to do the job.

*Interjection:* How do you spell that?

**Mr. Marchese:** It's just a Latin word. It just means moolah.

So you hire some individual—well respected; he's going to cost you money. At the end of the day, all of the players on the field are saying, "Well, hopefully, his views and recommendations will be respected." What did Premier McGuinty, the lawyer, say to that agreement? He said, "No, forget about it. Yes, we paid you a whole heap of money, but we're not going to listen to you. We're going to listen to me."

What's the point of hiring an expensive judge—a good man he is—to, at the end of the day, not pay any heed to what he had to say? Do you get that, Speaker? I'm talking to you. Do you get that?

I don't get it. That's inconsistent with the spirit. You forced a consultation they didn't want, and they got it. Then we're waiting for the recommendations to be accepted by the Premier, and he says no. Expensive judge—what's the point of all that? I have the same feeling you do, Speaker, about this, as you're expressing it right now.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** I'm just concluding.

All I want to say is that this flimsy little thing is empty. There's no reason to bring it forward. The reason they're doing it is to pretend they're doing something. They have the power to do anything they want. They don't need this piece of paper to do it. There is actually, in this bill, no penalty attached to the government or a municipality if they don't abide by some agreement—no



penalty. There is no enforcement mechanism built into the substantive bill—nada, nihil, niente.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Let's put an amendment.

**Mr. Marchese:** An amendment? You should just get rid of it. You should just say, "Why are we spending three days on this?"

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Let's just pass it then.

**Mr. Marchese:** The Liberal member is saying, "Let's just pass it," because they just want to get over this.

That's why I wanted my whole 20 minutes—and that's all I got today. I just want to point out that there's nothing in the bill. We've demystified it. We've pointed out the inconsistencies, and we know that the lawyers of the Liberal caucus are going to vote against it because they're bright, discerning individuals, and we know how a lot of Liberals might think about this, now that I've made my remarks.

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Don't take it to the bank.

**Mr. Marchese:** Maybe not, eh? But, to the citizens of Ontario, we thought we got rid of the Tories' playing with all those bills, where I used to say, "When you look at the title of any bill, it belies the substance of it." Look at the content of the bill and you will know that it belies the title of the bill. The Tories used to do it all the time. Now we've got Liberals doing the same thing. It just tires you out. I get tired. I do get tired of it. Three days of debate on an empty bill—I don't know. What a waste of my time and of this Legislature's. I just wanted the opportunity to say that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate?

Ms. Papatello has moved third reading of Bill 92, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### HIGHWAY 26

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 37(b), today's late show shall occur now, and that, following the late show, the Speaker shall adjourn the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is there unanimous consent to have the late show now and adjourn the House afterwards? Agreed.

I recognize the member for Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** I want to remind those at home that we have five minutes each—my side and the government side—in response to the dissatisfaction I expressed at the answer to the question I asked the Minister of Transportation today about Highway 26,

and why, when this project began and construction began on the 6.7 kilometres of highway, which is a major safety issue in my riding of Simcoe–Grey, the Liberal government, when they came to office in the summer of 2004, right in the middle of construction season, pulled the construction workers off the work site and nothing further has been done.

I want to remind you that this is a huge economic issue. It's really the gateway—the beginning of what could be a very prestigious gateway for the Georgian triangle area in my riding—to the four-seasons area of Collingwood, the Blue Mountains and Wasaga Beach.

I want to thank Mayor Cal Patterson, who has called in since I asked the question this afternoon in question period. He wants me to note for the record that nothing is being done there, and that we have at least two big retailers, two big-box stores that want to get on with construction along the new, realigned highway.

I would remind the minister that, for the first time this afternoon, he has admitted that the \$33 million was included in the provincial Tories' budget for the year 2000. I asked Ernie Eves, the Treasurer at the time, to include that as a safety issue, not a political issue. If I wanted to make it a political issue, I would have four-laned the whole thing from Barrie right through to Owen Sound.

The fact of the matter is, the construction started. The impression I get from your response this afternoon, Minister, is that you said, "Well, you guys had eight years to build this." The fact of the matter is, we made a commitment in 2000 to get on with this, because it came to my attention from people like the mayors of Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, Clearview and the Town of the Blue Mountains that this issue was getting more and more urgent. Since 1988, there have been 420 serious accidents, many of them fatal, on the old stretch of highway we're trying to replace. It's a safety issue and an economic issue, and it's one we are getting conflicting messages on.

You refused to talk to some of the mayors about this particular topic during the AMO conference. You talked to them about concerns they had about other projects, but you didn't want to talk about this. I have your own House notes—this is some of the conflicting messages we're getting—which I received, not out of the generosity of the government but under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The most recent note says construction is continuing and the project is being re-evaluated as part of the province's 10-year infrastructure plan. This should never have gone into your 10-year infrastructure plan. It's a simple realignment. It preceded you by years. You had no business meddling in it. So I asked you today, did you meddle in it because it's in an opposition member's riding? Are you going to hide behind this excuse of this 10-year plan?

1710

By the way, it took only three years to build a railway from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. It's going to take you about five times that to get this piece of road completed. Today I got the impression you think the road

hasn't been started. There's a big sign just north of Stayner on the existing Highway 26 that says, "Highway 26 Realignment: Construction Completion 2003." We did have some hiccups with property acquisition. That occurred back in 2000, 2001 and 2002. There is no excuse now. So I ask you, in the minute and a half I have, when are you going to complete it? Tell me what properties and I'll personally go and talk to these people. I want to know their names: Who's holding up this project?

I want you to know about, and I don't have time to read in, the dozens of letters I get from constituents, recent e-mails, every time I bring this up. There are over 130 entrances, I believe, on the existing highway. People who live along the existing highway have a hard time backing out on to this highway, getting out of their driveways and their homes. We're looking forward to making that a local road and safely completing the realignment. I'm not even asking you right now to finish phases 3 and 4 of the project. Phase 1 was the grading and the clearing that has been done to date. It's only half done. You have another three kilometres to go where you still have to clear. You've got to put in some culverts, some bridges and a cloverleaf.

Why did you stop this project when it's a serious safety issue? It should never have been rolled into your 10-year plan. I can only think it was a political move. You've used it a dozen times in this House when I've asked you or the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal or the Premier this question. I've got a list of questions, pages of them, that I've asked all through 2004 and 2005, ever since you pulled the bulldozers off the existing construction site. It was a shock. The local media had to call me that the bulldozers had gone.

It's construction season now. Minister, when are you going to complete this highway? When can we see bulldozers back on the site? Please don't penalize the people in this area because they voted Conservative, and at the provincial level have done so since Confederation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Minister of Transportation has five minutes to reply.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the member for asking this question and giving me the opportunity of five minutes to actually answer his question.

Let me set the record straight here. Mr. Speaker, you were in the House. I'm sure you recall that in July 2002,

the previous government announced it would build a new alignment of Highway 26. I am sure the member opposite agrees with that. But it took three years, from 2000 until April 2003, for the previous government to announce the first contract. They had planned to complete that contract in 2003, which they didn't do. The contract they let out in 2003 was for one phase, which did not include—I'm sure the member opposite knows—these five kilometres he's talking about. I wonder why they didn't include it. We completed that contract, which the previous government started, in 2004. I want to go on the record to state that.

Phase 2: Well over a dozen properties needed to be acquired. The last one was acquired at the end of March. This is a \$30-million project involving a six-kilometre stretch, approximately. Current design work is being completed, because they didn't complete it. So we're working on it. He should be feeling thankful for this rather than giving us criticism. We will start scheduling out the construction, following the design phase, starting with grading and drainage and then paving.

My question is, it started in 2000, and they didn't even announce the contract until 2003. We completed the contract. They did not include six kilometres of work in the first contract, but we are moving ahead with it. That is the answer I want to leave here.

Since I have a few more minutes left—

**Mr. Wilson:** When are you going to bring the bulldozers back?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** You didn't bring them for eight years, so we will bring them sooner than eight years.

Let me just say this: Since I have about two and a half minutes left, I want to address another question that was raised in the House today, and that question was about the taxi scoopers.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would say to the Minister of Transportation that you can't use this remaining time to discuss another question that was raised in the House today.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Then I have basically answered the question the member was asking.

**The Acting Speaker:** Pursuant to the previous agreement of the House, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

*The House adjourned at 1715.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East /	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton-Est	
Flamborough-Aldershot		Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie</b> (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N.</b> (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative		Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
	Prue, Michael (ND)		
Beaches-East York /		Hamilton West /	Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-York-Est		Hamilton-Ouest	
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona</b> (L)
Springdale		Addington	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brampton Centre /	Jeffrey, Linda (L)		
Brampton-Centre		Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga /	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga			<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands /	Minister of Municipal Affairs and
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston et les îles	Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)		Milloy, John (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre /	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Centre	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley East /	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Lanark-Carleton	Matthews, Deborah (L)
	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	
Don Valley West /		London North Centre /	
Don Valley-Ouest		London-Centre-Nord	
Dufferin-Peel-	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London West /	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher</b> (L)
Wellington-Grey	O'Toole, John (PC)	London-Ouest	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Durham	Colle, Mike (L)	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve</b> (L)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga Centre /	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S.</b> (L)
	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Erie-Lincoln	<b>Crozier, Bruce</b> (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East /	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Essex	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Mississauga-Est	
		Mississauga South /	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke Centre /		Mississauga-Sud	
Etobicoke-Centre	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West /	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke North /		Mississauga-Ouest	
Etobicoke-Nord		Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Centre /	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara-Centre	
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
		Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauvo, Bill (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay-Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ottawa-Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parkdale-High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)</b> Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Trinity-Spadina	<b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b> Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Zimmer, David (L)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakubski, John (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Windsor-St. Clair	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York North / York-Nord	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	York West / York-Ouest	
Scarborough-Rouge River	<b>Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L)</b> Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qaadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O. Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 3 May 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Great Lakes Jam</b>	
Mr. Murdoch.....	6751
<b>Anniversary of Polish Constitution</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6751
Ms. Broten .....	6753
<b>Education Week</b>	
Mrs. Cansfield .....	6751
Mr. Levac.....	6753
<b>Government's record</b>	
Mr. Runciman.....	6752
<b>South Asian community</b>	
Ms. Horwath .....	6752
<b>World Asthma Day</b>	
Ms. Mossop .....	6752
<b>Romanian accession treaty</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht.....	6753

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on general government</b>	
Mrs. Jeffrey.....	6753
Report adopted.....	6754

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Ontario budget</b>	
Mr. Tory.....	6754
Mr. McGuinty .....	6754
<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr. Tory.....	6755
Mr. McGuinty .....	6755
<b>Transit funding</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6756
Mr. Takhar .....	6756
<b>National child benefit supplement</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6757
Mr. McGuinty .....	6757
Ms. Pupatello .....	6757
<b>Government spending</b>	
Mr. Flaherty .....	6758
Mr. Phillips .....	6758
<b>Illegal taxi operators</b>	
Mr. Prue .....	6759
Mr. Takhar .....	6759
<b>Adoption disclosure</b>	
Mr. Duguid .....	6759
Ms. Pupatello .....	6759
<b>Region of Peel</b>	
Mr. Hudak .....	6760
Mr. McGuinty .....	6760
<b>Dangerous offenders</b>	
Mr. Kormos .....	6761
Mr. Bryant .....	6761

## Employment standards

Mr. Oraziotti.....	6761
Mr. Bentley .....	6761
<b>Highway 26</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6762
Mr. Takhar .....	6762
<b>Diagnostic services</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6762
Mr. McGuinty .....	6763
<b>Court facilities</b>	
Ms. Smith .....	6763
Mr. Bryant .....	6763
Mr. Caplan .....	6763
<b>Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund</b>	
Mr. Miller.....	6764
Mr. Bartolucci .....	6764

## PETITIONS

<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6764
<b>Anti-smoking legislation</b>	
Ms. Horwath.....	6764
Mr. Hardeman .....	6766
Mr. Delaney.....	6766
Mr. Martiniuk.....	6766
<b>Teacher qualification</b>	
Mr. Patten.....	6765
<b>Halton Recycling plant</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	6765
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Ms. Horwath.....	6765
Mr. Dunlop.....	6766
<b>Anaphylactic shock</b>	
Mr. Levac .....	6765, 6766
<b>Credit Valley Hospital</b>	
Mr. Delaney.....	6767
<b>Frederick Banting homestead</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6767

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Adoption Information Disclosure Act, 2005, Bill 183, Ms. Pupatello</b>	
Agreed to.....	6754
<b>Regional Municipality of Peel Act, 2005, Bill 186, Mr. Gerretsen</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6767, 6772
Mr. Prue .....	6771
Mr. Delaney.....	6771
Mr. Hudak .....	6771
Mr. Kular.....	6772
Vote deferred.....	6772

## THIRD READINGS

<b>Municipal Amendment Act, 2005, Bill 92, Mr. Gerretsen</b>	
Ms. Pupatello .....	6773
Mrs. Van Bommel .....	6773
Mr. O'Toole.....	6775
Mr. Marchese .....	6780
Agreed to .....	6783

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Visitors</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6754
Mrs. Jeffrey.....	6754
The Speaker .....	6754
Mr. Dunlop .....	6767
<b>Notice of dissatisfaction</b>	
The Acting Speaker .....	6772

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

<b>Highway 26</b>	
Mr. Wilson.....	6783
Mr. Takhar.....	6784

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 3 mai 2005

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2005 sur la divulgation de renseignements sur les adoptions, projet de loi 183, M<sup>me</sup> Pupatello</b>	
Adoptée .....	6754
<b>Loi de 2005 sur la municipalité régionale de Peel, projet de loi 186, M. Gerretsen</b>	
Vote différé.....	6772

## TROISIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités, projet de loi 92, M. Gerretsen</b>	
Adoptée .....	6783





No. 140

N° 140

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 4 May 2005**

**Mercredi 4 mai 2005**



Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 May 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### ANTI-TOBACCO LEGISLATION

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):** Many Ontarians are truly disappointed with the lack of consultation on the Liberals' anti-tobacco bill. Two hundred and twenty-five associations and individuals applied to testify before the finance committee; only 88 were allowed to appear.

On the fourth day, I tabled a motion for more hearings. My motion was defeated by the Liberals. Now we learn that House leader Dwight Duncan and Minister Sandra Pupatello have joined my cause in calling on this government to hold additional hearings. The Windsor Star quotes MPP Duncan: "'It's quite unusual,' he said of his and Pupatello's request that the committee, headed by Chatham–Kent Essex MPP Pat Hoy, hear from an additional delegation."

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, if passed as is, will impact many people and businesses. Why wouldn't we want to hear from all those who know first-hand what Bill 164 will do to them? One hundred and thirty-seven associations and individuals were not allowed to testify.

This morning in the media studio, we heard from the Ontario Convenience Stores Association and the Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association. They explained very clearly the crime and the danger that their owners, operators and employees suffer as a result of Liberal tobacco taxes and display bans.

The question is, what is this government afraid of? Do the right thing: Hold additional hearings. I'm getting hundreds of faxes from Korean businessmen asking for the right to come forward.

#### HIGHWAY 3

**Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I rise to speak again about an issue of great importance; that is, four-laning and safety improvements on Highway 3 in my riding of Essex. I was pleased to see that since I last rose in this House in March to urge the minister to get on with these safety improvements, the project has begun to move forward. The information session held in the town of Essex on April 7 was a step in the right direction. Improvements to intersections, which will take place this summer, are also a welcome start.

But for the residents of my riding, the widening and safety improvements on Highway 3 cannot come soon enough. Some have lost friends and have themselves been injured in the many accidents that have occurred on what many consider to be a very dangerous stretch of highway. Traffic counts now reach as high as 15,000 vehicles a day during peak commuting times.

With the environmental studies and design work still to be done, MTO officials have said that the beginning of construction could be two years away. This is too long, too far away. I urge the minister to speed up that process and ensure that funds are in place to move ahead on this important project once the studies are completed. My constituents need to know that the widening of Highway 3 in my riding will remain a top priority of our government.

#### REDEDICATION OF FOLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** On Sunday, May 1, I had the privilege of attending the rededication of Foley Catholic School and the blessing of the new school addition. Foley Catholic School is located in the community of Brechin, which is on the eastern boundary of the riding of Simcoe North and part of the township of Ramara. The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board and the Foley Catholic School community have been preparing for this addition for several years. It was very nice to see both Monsignor O'Neill and Father Doyle take part in the blessing.

I'd like to thank the following people for their outstanding contributions: principal Paul Campbell and all the staff at Foley; Michael O'Keefe, the director of education, and his staff at the board; chairperson Diana Riffert and the board of directors at the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board; Mr. James Canning, the local trustee for that region; Ms. Sheri Black, chair, and all the folks of the Foley Catholic School Community Council; and the community of Brechin and area for their continued support of the young people of Ramara. Finally, in this Education Week, I would like to congratulate the students—past, present and future—for their commitment to quality education at Foley Catholic School. Their commitment has made this beautiful new addition a reality.

On a personal note, I am extremely pleased that since my election in June 1999, all four elementary schools in the township of Ramara have now had beautiful new additions.

## MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** Yesterday morning, I was at the GO station in Clarkson at 6:30 a.m. to help the Peel branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association kick off Mental Health Week. With Sandy Milakovic, the executive director of the Peel branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, her trained panda bear and several volunteers, we gave away over 2,000 chocolate Hugs and 2,000 cards with the 10 tips for mental health. I have also distributed a chocolate Hug to each member of the House, along with the 10 tips for good mental health:

- “(1) Build a healthy self-esteem.
- “(2) Eat well and keep fit.
- “(3) Create positive family relationships.
- “(4) Make friends who count.
- “(5) Create a meaningful budget.
- “(6) Get involved as a volunteer.
- “(7) Manage stress effectively.
- “(8) Learn to cope with changes that affect you.
- “(9) Identify and deal with your moods.
- “(10) Find a spirituality to call your own.”

As we all know, mental illness strikes people from all walks of life. It is now becoming a problem for our youth, manifested in the form of eating disorders and depression. Early diagnosis is one of the keys to a fast, sustainable recovery.

Today we remind everyone that it's Mental Health Week, and in celebration of it, please give someone you love a hug.

1340

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS  
AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** The month of May is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, and I am pleased to support the work of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada and its thousands of volunteers.

Canadians have one of the highest rates of MS in the world, and as the most common neurological disease affecting young adults, three more people are diagnosed with MS in Canada every single day.

Although first identified by a French neurologist, Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot, in 1868, we unfortunately still do not know what causes MS, although researchers are now closer than ever to finding the answers.

I'm pleased to acknowledge the ongoing contributions to MS research by Dr. Brenda Banwell of the world-renowned Hospital for Sick Children here in Toronto. She is part of an international effort, including more than 20 Canadian hospitals and universities, to study MS in children, who can be stricken with this disease as early as age three.

The annual Carnation Day fundraiser for MS begins this week, leading up to Mother's Day, to especially underscore the fact that MS affects twice as many women as men. I would like to take this opportunity to urge

everyone to wear their carnation and to support this campaign.

On behalf of my leader, John Tory, and the Ontario PC caucus, I congratulate the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada and its many volunteers and researchers for all they are doing on behalf of those suffering with MS and their families. This Mother's Day, we should all buy a carnation in support of their important work.

## THOROLD BLACKHAWKS

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** After making it to the Sutherland Cup Ontario Junior B championship series in three of the last four seasons, the Thorold Georgia Pacific Blackhawks finally won the cup before a capacity crowd at the Thorold Arena on Tuesday, April 26.

Since the team was formed in 1982, it has gone through tough years, but those tough times steeled the resolve of the team to build them to the formidable force they are today.

The Hawks won four out of five games in the Junior B League championship series, and the only game they lost in this series was the team's first loss since December 17, 2004—a 30-game winning streak.

As impressive as the team has been, the loyalty and fervour of its fans is even more impressive. In just over an hour, the tickets for the final game were sold out, filling the Thorold Arena to its 1,750-fan capacity. Stalwart fan Mel Swart drove from Thorold to Chatham and returned home again that same night for the fourth game—regrettably the first game Thorold lost after 30 consecutive wins.

I want to thank the team's sponsors, Georgia Pacific and Big Red Market, for their support of the team. In fact, Dan Timmins, who works at Big Red, is the coach of the Thorold Blackhawks, and I want to close with words from Dan Timmins: “We put Thorold on the map for junior hockey in Ontario.”

## EDUCATION WEEK

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** I stand before this House today in recognition of Education Week and of the fine accomplishments this government has made. Under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Education, we have made great strides to reconcile the terribly acrimonious relationship the Tories developed with the teachers, the parents and the children of Ontario.

The Tories played hopscotch with our schools. They stomped on teachers and jumped over students. The leader of the official opposition should be made aware of the legacy left to Ontario by his party. Under the Tories, children lost 24 million days to labour strikes. While the Tories forced teachers out of work, the Liberals have brought long-term peace and stability to our schools. The Tories allowed the dropout rate in Ontario to skyrocket to 30%. The Tories closed more than 500 schools. The



Tories took teacher-librarians, art teachers, music teachers and support staff out of the schools.

This government represents a new era for education in Ontario. And who will this benefit the most? Our children. Our children are our future. Unlike the Tories, the Liberal government doesn't play politics with our children. Parents need to know that their schools are finally able to focus on what is important: educating Ontario's children.

We've put more money than ever before into special education. We've reduced class sizes in 1,300 schools, and more than 100 programs have been approved to help reduce the dropout rate and improve outcomes for students at risk. And that is just the start.

This is meaningful change for Ontario. Children across the province now have the tools to build a brighter future.

### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North):** Today, I'm joining parliamentarians across Canada by recognizing Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month. I'm wearing an MS Society of Canada HOPE bracelet as well as a red carnation in support of the fight against this unpredictable and often disabling disease. I would encourage all members to join me in showing our collective support for those who live with multiple sclerosis.

Unfortunately, Canadians have one of the highest rates of MS in the world. In fact, three more people in Canada are diagnosed daily with MS. It is the most common neurological disease affecting young adults in Canada.

A French neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot, first identified this condition in 1868. As a doctor myself, I can tell you that I have personally seen how MS can cause loss of balance, impaired speech, extreme fatigue, double vision and paralysis. To this day, we don't know what causes MS, but every day researchers are coming closer to finding the answer. MS affects women twice as often as men, making the MS carnation campaign particularly relevant during the Mother's Day weekend.

With your permission, Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence of Himani Ediriweera in the gallery today. Himani was recently diagnosed with MS. I would also like to recognize the presence of several representatives of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada.

Speaker, I would formally ask for unanimous consent to wear this red carnation in support of the courage and efforts of the MS society.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Before I ask if there is unanimous consent, I would have appreciated that this be asked before it was worn. Anyhow, many members of Parliament here now are wearing them, and I presume that you are now asking for unanimous consent to wear them. You could take it off and put it back on, but since you have it on, it's OK.

Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

### LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** This week, we pay special honour to the Canadian soldiers who fought so bravely for the liberation of the Netherlands over 60 years ago.

My mom and dad would tell us, as kids, about the Nazi invasion of their communities and about being forced from their homes. But it wasn't until we were adults and time had eased their memories that we learned about the true suffering and horror they had witnessed. We heard about the bombings of their villages, the running for cover at the sound of approaching airplanes, the boxes of documents floating in the Rhine and the shooting of anyone who ventured out to retrieve them, and the hungry winter, when the Nazis tried to starve the Dutch into submission.

My father-in-law and mother-in-law had their own stories. Martin Van Bommel was by then the father of nine. When the Nazis raided their village for young people to add to their dwindling forces, Martin raised the alarm and then hid the young local men on his own farm, at great risk to himself and his family.

The Allied forces were a welcome sight that spring, and my mother still tells her grandchildren about the liberation by the Canadian soldiers. In the months that followed, Dutch families came to know their liberators better. As the need to rebuild their lives became apparent, Dutch families followed their Canadian heroes to Canada, many settling here in Ontario.

Out of respect and admiration, a tradition of tending the graves of the fallen Canadian soldiers has been established in the Netherlands, and Dutch Canadians continue to tell the next generation about the bravery of those Canadian soldiers.

So to all those Canadian soldiers I give our heartfelt thanks. Hartelijk bedankt.

### VISITORS

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to recognize my co-op student, Fabianna Khan, in the audience and her two teachers, Ken Logan and Pat Lee, from Heart Lake Secondary School in the gallery today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** That is not a point of order.

1350

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Mr. Kennedy moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 194, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 194, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

I understand that the Minister of Education will be making the statement afterwards.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP), 2005  
LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA PROTECTION DE  
L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
(GÉRANCE DES PRODUITS)

Mr. Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 195, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to the stewardship of products and of the packages or containers used for products / Projet de loi 195, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement en ce qui a trait à la gérance des produits et des emballages ou des contenants utilisés pour ceux-ci.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** This bill will allow for regulations that can require manufacturers of packages and containers used for products, or other persons, to implement and comply with plans concerning stewardship or waste management. It also allows for the institution of a deposit return system on various products.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN OF  
RECENT IMMIGRANTS  
ÉDUCATION POUR ENFANTS  
D'IMMIGRANTS RÉCENTS

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I rise today to speak to legislative amendments that would, if passed by this House, unlock our school doors for children of recent immigrants.

All students need the advantage that a good education provides, and I believe that publicly funded education is the cornerstone of a fair, productive, civilized and socially cohesive society.

Chaque enfant a le droit d'apprendre. Nous avons la charge d'enlever les barrières qui laissent des enfants dans un vide administratif, sans égard au statut d'immigration de leurs parents.

Every child has the right to learn, and we all have a responsibility to remove barriers that leave children in administrative limbo regardless of their parents' immigration status.

Our mission and our moral purpose are to ensure that children are educated to a high level. It should not matter

where you came from, but rather where you are going. How do you put a price on education or on someone's future? Currently, the Education Act requires boards to charge fees, which can be as high as \$7,000 or \$10,000 annually per child, for temporary residents to attend school. There have been several cases where children of immigrant parents were kept at home for long periods of time because their families did not have proper immigration status and could not afford to pay fees. We take the view that this is simply unacceptable in Ontario. Today's proposed legislation is an important prelude to ensuring that Ontario students enjoy a good outcome from our publicly funded education system.

Le projet de loi que nous déposons aujourd'hui s'inscrit dans l'engagement que nous avons pris, consistant à veiller à ce que les élèves de l'Ontario obtiennent un bon résultat de notre système d'éducation financé par les deniers publics.

We need to give our children an Ontario education advantage so they can develop the skills they need to get good jobs and enjoy life to the fullest. Our province needs an Ontario education advantage too. We need a workforce of the future, one that attracts investment and supports a strong and prosperous economy.

Many of the government's education initiatives already underway are helping the thousands of students across Ontario, including reduced class sizes in the primary grades and programs to help struggling high school students. But there are also niche education needs that should be addressed, and this is one of them. If we are to build better citizens and a stronger society, our education system needs to be one that embraces all Ontarians, especially newcomers to our province.

Si nous devons former de meilleurs citoyens et créer une société plus dynamique, notre système d'éducation doit inclure tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes, et en particulier les nouveaux-venus dans la province.

We all know that newcomers to Canada face many challenges, but getting their children into school should not be one of them. If passed, this legislation would ensure that children are no longer penalized because of their immigration status or that of their parents. The current list of exemptions we have in the Education Act would be expanded to allow children of certain classes of temporary residents to attend school in Ontario without being forced to pay fees. These new exemptions would include children whose parents have applied for permanent resident status to Citizenship and Immigration Canada and plan to stay in the country, and children whose parents are studying at a publicly funded Ontario university or college.

Today I believe we have with us in the House Albert Koehl, who's the chair of the Education Rights Task Force. He has been an advocate for the rights of immigrant children seeking entry to school in Ontario.

It is our firm belief that many of these students—in fact, it's in the track record that we have for many of these students—will end up being Canadian citizens, making it even more important that we provide them now with the opportunity to get a good education.



Ontario's public education system can and must deliver excellence for all of our students. This is, I put, a simple issue of fairness. Every child must be able to attend school and make the most of their future. That is why I'm proud to introduce legislation today to amend the Education Act that would open the doors of learning and opportunity to children new to Ontario, children who will grow to become valuable members of our civilized society.

Chaque enfant doit pouvoir être scolarisé et bâtir son avenir. C'est pourquoi je suis fier aujourd'hui de déposer un nouveau projet de loi qui modifierait la Loi sur l'éducation, qui ouvrirait les portes de l'apprentissage et qui offrirait des possibilités aux enfants qui viennent d'arriver en Ontario, des enfants qui deviendront plus tard des membres à part entière de notre société civilisée.

Ontario's education system must be one that welcomes all young minds and ensures that every child has a place to learn and grow. I ask all members to join with me in supporting this bill.

#### CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** It is with great pleasure that I rise today to report to my colleagues on one of the great successes we've had in improving health care in this province. I want to tell you about the progress we've made in our childhood immunization program, progress that has now made this province a leader in North America in protecting young people against vaccine-preventable diseases.

As of last January, three new vaccines were added to Ontario's immunization schedule for young people. They will protect children against chicken pox, invasive meningococcal and pneumococcal diseases. These are serious—and in the case of meningitis, extremely serious—but preventable childhood diseases. That is the critical point: They are preventable. It's as easy as getting a needle. It's free, and it saves lives.

Altogether, since September 2004, we've administered 136,000 doses of the varicella vaccine against chicken pox and more than 200,000 doses of vaccine against pneumococcal disease. While it's impossible to say precisely how many young people have been vaccinated against these diseases, because multiple doses are often required, suffice it to say that it's around 100,000.

In addition, more than 180,000 youths have now been immunized against meningococcal meningitis. That is more than 180,000 young people who are now protected against an extremely serious and occasionally fatal disease. Meningitis can strike even the healthy with tragic results. It's very dangerous. It spreads easily, but it is preventable.

While we've made a great start in preventing it, the fact is that thousands of young people who should be receiving this vaccine haven't yet. That is the second message I want to deliver today.

We've launched an ad campaign to inform parents about the expanded immunization program and to en-

courage them to make sure their kids' vaccinations are up to date. We would encourage parents to talk to their doctors or call their local public health unit for more information about where and when they can get their kids immunized.

#### 1400

The ad campaign is also directed quite specifically at teenagers, with banner ads running on popular Internet sites. These young people are at an age when they're sharing everything from soft drinks to kisses, and are therefore more likely to spread this disease. We need to warn them about the dangers of contracting meningitis through contact as casual and innocent as a shared soft drink or a kiss. We would say to teenagers, if you know you haven't received a vaccination, tell your parents, tell your school. All it takes is a needle and a few moments of your life. You'll be protecting yourself and your friends.

The benefits of immunization are obvious. Many experts have made a very strong argument that immunization is the single most important public health triumph of the 20th century. The general disappearance of diseases such as polio is a powerful demonstration of the effectiveness of immunization.

But that success has inevitably led some to complacency about the further need to vaccinate. The fact is that such diseases are only under control because of immunization. Examples in other countries demonstrate that a decrease in immunization rates leads to outbreaks of disease. We need look no further than Oxford county and the rubella outbreak that's going on there to see the importance of immunization. That's why we must remain vigilant and continue to ensure that our kids are getting these important and sometimes life-saving shots.

Of course, there's also a collateral advantage to immunization. Immunization is the happy exception in health services. The savings it creates from reduced medical care and fewer hospital admissions can help to offset its cost. This really is a case where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Our free immunization program will save Ontario families approximately \$600 per child for all three free vaccines. It's a big part of our overall commitment to revitalize public health in Ontario, which in turn is a big part of our overall plan to improve health care. We are reducing wait times, increasing access to nurses and doctors, and helping Ontarians stay healthier. By doing these things, we are taking the vision of health care we share with Ontarians and making it a reality. That vision is of a system that helps people stay healthy, delivers good care to them when they get sick and will be there for their children and grandchildren—a dependable system, now and in the future.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm proud to rise in the House today to inform all

honourable members that this year marks a significant milestone in the history of the province. It's the 75th anniversary of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

When the Ontario government created the new Department of Public Welfare in September 1930, nearly a full year had passed since the stock market crash triggered a worldwide economic collapse and the start of what would be one of the most turbulent decades in our country's history.

Despite the new department's name, Ontario in 1930 lacked a public welfare structure as we know it today. If you were poor in 1930, you didn't have many options. Like the rest of the country, Ontario had no regular system of providing assistance to people in need. In fact, the prevailing attitude was that charity would make people soft, and poverty was considered the result of personal failure, a defect of character, especially if you were able-bodied.

When the Department of Public Welfare was established, Ontario's social assistance programs were rudimentary, unevenly distributed and provided assistance only to a needy few: World War I veterans and their families, poor widows with more than one child, and meagre pensions to eligible people 70 years or older. As a last resort, you could go to a house of refuge where the homeless, the destitute, the elderly and the insane were all housed together under one roof.

The Depression was a watershed. It's hard for us today to comprehend the immense suffering of those harsh times and the despair people must have felt as the global economy faltered and then collapsed, and more and more people lost their jobs. At the height of the Depression, one in five Canadians was unemployed. Until the Second World War, unemployment never declined below 12%.

If the Depression was a watershed event in Canada's social development, it was our ministry's baptism by fire. The heartache and despair of the 1930s show us all too clearly how vulnerable we are to events over which we have little control, and how through no fault of our own, we can stumble. Sometimes we come to a point in our lives when we need to grasp hold of a helping hand in order to regain our footing.

In many ways, the early history of the Ministry of Community and Social Services is the story of enormous events: the Great Depression and the Second World War. It's the story of the people battered by those events and how this ministry helped them, people like:

- the British child guests, the children who came to Ontario seeking a safe haven from the bombs of wartime London. The Ontario government enacted legislation to make these children wards of the Department of Public Welfare.

- the thalidomide babies of the early 1960s. When the tragic consequences of that drug became evident, the Department of Public Welfare took immediate steps to implement a program of financial assistance to help the families of these special-needs children, despite the fact that drug control was, and still is, a federal responsibility.

- Hungarian refugees fleeing a homeland ripped part from civil unrest. In January 1957, the Department of Public Welfare helped nearly 20,000 Hungarian refugees by establishing a special nursery at the Toronto refugee centre to free the parents to make the arrangements necessary to become part of their new country.

The history of this ministry is the story of the thousands of people who, over the years, have worked tirelessly with compassion and dedication to help Ontario's most vulnerable—people like Dr. Dorothea Crittenden.

Dr. Crittenden's remarkable career began with this ministry in 1937, when Ontario was still grappling with the effects of the Great Depression. When the Department of Public Welfare took on unique responsibilities during the Second World War, she was there. She contributed to the historic expansion of the ministry's programs and services that characterized the post-war years.

It was fitting that Dr. Crittenden's career culminated with an achievement remarkable for those times. In 1974 she was appointed Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services, making her the first woman deputy minister in the history of the province.

After her retirement in 1978, she continued her commitment to the province's well-being by leading the Ontario Human Rights Commission and serving as interim chair of the Social Assistance Review Board.

On April 30, Dr. Crittenden celebrated her 90th birthday.

Today, not only do we want to congratulate her; I also want to, on behalf of everyone, thank her for what she has done for the ministry, this government and this province. Her work, grounded in genuine compassion for the people of Ontario, is her personal and professional legacy to us. In so many ways, her achievements and contributions are the foundation of our work in the ministry today.

The history of the ministry is also the story of the thousands of Ontarians who have needed our assistance over the last 75 years. We're very proud to feature one of the former residents of our facilities on the cover of the 2005 Government of Ontario Telephone Directory, which many people likely will have seen. Our client today is proudly still living in our community. This speaks to the ongoing commitment of our ministry and our staff to support vulnerable people and to be there for our citizens with assistance when it's needed.

This year, Community and Social Services is looking back with pride on a long history, and we're also looking ahead with confidence and optimism. We work now to transform our developmental services, strengthen the Family Responsibility Office and restore integrity, fairness and equity to social assistance programs, shattering the myths and breaking down stereotypes. We're renewing our mandate, mission and vision. I'd like to think that in 25 years, when our ministry celebrates its centennial, the year 2005 will be deemed a watershed in the ministry's history: the year that heralded in a new era for Ontario's social and community services.



Through all the stories that make up the fabric of our ministry's history, there is one thread that remains constant: For 75 years, our ministry has provided the transitional supports and programs to which Ontario's most vulnerable turn when they need a helping hand. For 75 years, our ministry has been the heart—and the soul, we say—of the government and of our communities.

#### EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** In response to the statement by the Minister of Education: We have the best interests of children in mind, of course, as paramount in Ontario. The legislation seeks to make sure that all children in Ontario have access to education. To that extent, of course, it must be supported.

The bill, though, that we just got is this massive thing. I'm sure you'll understand if we want to review it, perhaps, before we endorse the entire document, because you never know what we might find in there once we have a chance to go through it.

This idea, by the way, has been around since last year at least, when the member for Burlington told the Minister of Education about this problem, even with Rotary exchange students having to pay to go to the schools in Ontario. So I'm glad that finally the government is doing something about it, especially since we've got this young student in Hamilton who hasn't been in school for two years while your government dithered about this.

The other point that needs to be made: This costs \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year per student. This cost should be borne by the federal government, not by the people of the province of Ontario. The federal government is responsible for immigration. I don't know why this Liberal government can't work that out with that other Liberal government. I hope they do so soon, so we'll stop putting all these burdens on the overburdened taxpayers of Ontario.

1410

#### CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I'm pleased to respond to the statement on immunization. This government, of course, was forced to take action due to the efforts of my colleague the member from Nickel Belt, who had a private member's bill on the need for universal access to immunization on the record for a long time. I introduced a similar private member's bill, and then, fortunately, the federal government decided to invest \$300 million in a national immunization program. Finally this government was moved to action, at a time when, if you lived in the United States, Mexico or some of the other provinces, you would already have had access. But we are pleased that people are responding, and I would encourage all parents and all families in this province to make sure their children are immunized and

take advantage of the free immunization program in order to keep them and themselves healthy.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I too would like to publicly acknowledge the extraordinary and compassionate record of thousands of public servants in this province who have served in the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the last 75 years, and in particular our former ministers and deputy ministers, who provided the leadership.

As we know, Ontario has a rich tradition of being a leader in social policy development: the first jurisdiction to outlaw slavery, the first jurisdiction to bring in a human rights code, the first child labour laws—the list goes on and on. Ontario has a world-class reputation of understanding the needs of the vulnerable. It's a great tribute to this ministry and to the large number of public servants who have extended their compassion and created this high standard for all of Canada.

I know there's been an open-door policy for many years in the Ministry of Community and Social Services. For the seven years I was a critic in this area, it was not uncommon to pick up the phone and speak to the deputy minister.

I remember clearly a time when I had a challenge with a family who had a daughter who was stricken with developmental disabilities. I was able to pick up the phone and talk to Dr. Charles Pascal, under the NDP government. Dr. Pascal and I discussed the challenges facing this family, which was going to surrender the child to a crown ward. He said, "Cam, do you want to call Vince Tedesco at the southwest regional office or should I?" I said, "No, Deputy, that will be just fine. I will make the call."

Within a day we had a case management review, and a plan was put together. That has been part of the legacy of this great ministry, one which stands as a testament to the ability to make sure that persons with disabilities aren't pigeonholed and put into various categories, but that we look at their complete needs.

That's why I would like to say to the minister that I would ask her to build on the trust that's historic in this ministry and to remove her edict which prevents these same bureaucrats from talking to elected members of this House, on all sides of the House. I believe we should continue to trust them, and I believe we should continue to support them.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Before I ask for responses from the third party, I'd like the conversation to be a little bit quieter. I'm having difficulty—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I would ask the conversations to be a little bit quieter. I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I'm here to respond primarily to the 75th anniversary of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. I have to tell you that it is a great and long legacy.

The minister said toward the end of her speech that when we look back 25 years from now, 2005 should be seen to be some kind of a pivotal year. And I put it right back: I hope it is a pivotal year. I think Ontarians will know next week whether 2005 is a pivotal year to those who are desperate and poor in Ontario, because next week we are going to find out whether or not all of those children who have the money clawed back from them and their families—and this government promised to do something about it. We're going to see whether or not you continue the tradition from the previous government or the tradition from wonderful people like Dr. Dorothea Crittenden.

You have a choice to make, and that choice is abundantly clear, I would say to everyone on the government benches. You can have a legacy that is 75 years old of a caring and compassionate Ontario that looked out for poor children, whether those poor children came as a result of the bombing in London, whether they were the children of Hungarian refugees, or whether they are the children of ordinary Ontarians who do not have the luck and the good fortune to have good-paying jobs and to be out there in the workforce. Because, quite frankly, what is happening to all of those children today who have their monies clawed back from them, if they have the misfortune of living in families whose parents rely on the ODSP or general welfare, is that they have an extended life of poverty. They have \$122 per month, on average, taken from each and every one of them every month—money that they could use for food; money they could use for clothes; money that they could use in their own family for housing or heating or electrical bills or the thousand other good purposes for which it could be spent.

I spent half an hour or so last night with 25 parents from Beaches–East York, and I was talking to them about the clawback. I was surprised to learn, although I shouldn't have been, that most of them were unaware that your government claws back the money from the most vulnerable and the poorest children in this province. It came as quite a shock, because they had thought, for once, that you might be compassionate.

I want to talk as well about the ODSP rates and the rates for those on general welfare. Yes, you have increased them by a paltry 3% this year, and yes, I'm sure that the people who get the 3% increase are somewhat thankful that at least it went up and didn't remain the same, as it has for the previous eight years. But I have to tell you that that is not an amount of money that you can justifiably be proud of. It is not an amount of money that allows people to live decent lives. It condemns them forever to a life of poverty—grinding poverty, poverty which is inescapable.

You have an obligation, if you want to live up to a 75-year-old wonderful tradition, not to follow the dictates of

the previous government or your own weakness in the last budget. You have an obligation, if you are to do the right thing and to live up to the wonder of Ontario, to work for these people and on behalf of these people.

You need to increase the shelter allowances, which you promised to do in the last election.

You need to start working on the FRO and its total mismanagement. You have a bill. You have a bill that virtually does nothing to help those children who require money through the Family Responsibility Office. There's no budget for additional staff. There is nothing there for resources. There's no new computer system. I don't think taking away a fishing licence from a father who doesn't pay quite cuts it.

We believe that we are the voice of those ordinary people. We stand day after day in this Legislature asking you to do the right thing. It is not good enough that you stand up here and celebrate 75 years of other people's and other governments' accomplishments. You have next week to prove yourself, and simply going back over what happened 75 years ago and all of the history of Ontario does not cut it. You have an opportunity next week to show exactly what you are made of. If you increase those rates, if you end the clawbacks, if you do something about the Family Responsibility Office, then you will be worthy of carrying on the tradition. If not, you will be even worse than the government you replaced.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw the members' attention to the member's gallery east, where we have here today a constituent from my riding, Sarah Shannon, who is the mother of Sabrina Shannon, a child who lost her life to an anaphylactic reaction in September 2003. Sarah is here today with other members from Anaphylaxis Canada and NASK for committee hearings in support of Bill 3, introduced by the honourable member from Brant. We welcome her here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The member knows that is not a point of order.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 SUR LA MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE DE PEEL

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 186, Loi traitant de la composition du conseil de la municipalité régionale de Peel.



**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1420 to 1425.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be checked by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Bradley, James J.  
Broten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Brownell, Jim  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Cordiano, Joseph  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona

Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Hoy, Pat  
Kennedy, Gerard  
Kwinter, Monte  
Levac, Dave  
Marsales, Judy  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McMeekin, Ted  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Oraziotti, David  
Parsons, Ernie  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry

Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadi, Shafiq  
Racco, Mario G.  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Smitherman, George  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Barrett, Toby  
Bisson, Gilles  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Flaherty, Jim  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron

Jeffrey, Linda  
Kormos, Peter  
Kular, Kuldip  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm  
Munro, Julia  
Murdoch, Bill  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.

Prue, Michael  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Scott, Laurie  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tory, John  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Yakubski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 52; the nays are 27.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I would ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

**The Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I move that notwithstanding any standing order, in addition to its regularly scheduled

meetings, the standing committee on finance and economic affairs be authorized to meet on Friday, May 6, 2005, for the purpose of considering Bill 186, An Act respecting the composition of the council of The Regional Municipality of Peel.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

1430

### APPOINTMENTS TO LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):**

On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: The government has submitted to the standing committee on government agencies candidates for appointment to the local health integration networks, which are fiduciary transfer entities that, by the government's own admission, do not exist because no legislation exists.

The Minister of Health has indicated, through documents made public by his own ministry, that legislation is forthcoming to this House. But before that legislation has even been introduced, the government has run advertisements and hired people, as if the LHIN entities are a fait accompli.

I maintain that the evidence shows that government is in contempt of the Legislature because the Minister of Health has presupposed passage of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I'm asking for you to rule whether the minister and this government are in contempt of the Legislature, because it is my understanding that there is due process in the Legislature where bills are debated, changed and may be rejected, and that people appointed to entities that such bills might create need the bill to be in existence before they can be appointed.

The evidence is as follows—and I'll make four points:

(1) Government advertising was published in major daily and regional newspapers that called for applications to entities that had not been created, and the government Web site for the Public Appointments Secretariat from December 12, 2004, said:

"The government of Ontario seeks chairs for each of the 14 local health integration networks that are being established across the province. Local health integration networks are a key component of Ontario's health care transformation agenda with a unique mandate to support local capacity to plan, coordinate and integrate the delivery of care at the community level within their defined geographic areas. The chair will provide leadership to the board and ensure that the board operates in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements of the province of Ontario."

The words "that are" presuppose that legislation creating LHINs would pass. Keep in mind that this wording was published on a government Web site and similar ads were placed in newspapers.

The posting on the government's Public Appointments Secretariat Web site clearly gives the indication and inference that LHINs were a fait accompli.

The words "in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements" imply on the part of the government that legislation for LHINs exists, which it does not, by the government's own admission.

(2) Additionally, a list of 42 order-in-council appointments for the 14 LHINs was submitted to the standing committee on government agencies on April 27, 2005.

The submission of the names, in and of themselves, is a presupposition of the legislation, because the names provided were the outcome of a hiring process that was based on an absolute absence of legislative or regulatory frameworks but with the inference that such frameworks would exist.

(3) The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's own Web site and their most recent LHIN bulletin, number 11, published May 2, 2005, clearly state the following, on page 1, section 1, paragraph 3: "Through LHINs, the government intends to devolve a good deal of power and authority to the LHINs, leaving the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care ... to function as a head office, providing more strategic direction."

This clearly indicates that the government intends to devolve power and authority regarding the delivery of health care to the LHINs.

Since dozens of pieces of legislation exist that govern the provision of health care in Ontario, one can therefore assume that to devolve power, new legislation and corresponding regulations would be needed.

The government even admitted this in the standing committee on government agencies on March 30, 2005, and this point shows that the government is intending to move forward with legislation but has not as yet.

On page 2, section 2, paragraph 1: "Legislation will be needed to enable LHINs to perform certain functions that are envisioned for LHINs as they evolve toward their mature or end state. The ministry is working on policy options for the proposed legislation."

"Legislation will be needed" clearly shows the government is in contempt because legislation for LHINs has not even been introduced into this Legislature. Given the fact that the ministry's own document was published on May 2 and that the names for the LHIN boards were submitted on April 27, 2005, the government has moved forward with appointees of major fiduciary entities without even a framework for those entities in place or terms of reference.

(4) The terms of reference of the standing committee on government agencies given by this House state that the purpose of the committee is to review the Lieutenant Governor in Council's appointments to an "agency, board or commission."

Since LHINs are not an agency, board or commission because no such entity exists at law until such time as legislation is brought forward, the appointment of people to a non-existing entity is arguably outside the scope of the committee under the standing orders.

Some people might cite the precedence of the appointment of the Employment Equity Commissioner in 1991 or the education review commission in the mid-1990s,

which were Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments made before their respective commissions were created in law. However, a commission is an advisory body that does not have fiduciary responsibilities of billions of dollars as the proposal of the government indicates with respect to LHINs.

Precedence for this comes in that all major transfer partners of the government have legislative frameworks, from hospitals to school boards to universities to municipalities, and that governments of the past have created these institutions first.

Therefore, if positions have been advertised and filled, then the government is once again presupposing passage of a legislative framework that requires the blessing of this House.

There is precedence for ruling in contempt on similar issues. It was on Wednesday, January 15, 1997, that the then member for Oakwood, Mr. Colle, now the government member from Eglinton-Lawrence, rose on a question to express concern about the government's use of print media to communicate its agenda.

The advertisement questioned by the member from Eglinton-Lawrence was about the government's program for reforming municipal governance in Toronto. The member indicated that the advertising occurred in advance of consideration by the House of legislative measures that would implement the reform agenda and in advance of public hearings. The member asked the Speaker to determine whether this advertising affected was contempt.

In like manner, the creation of LHINs is part of the government's so-called transformation agenda, and the advertisements published by the government left a clear impression of inevitability and conclusiveness with respect to the creation of the entity known as a LHIN.

This can be compared to the same argument made by the member regarding the finality of legislation to amalgamate Toronto in 1996, whereby Speaker Stockwell ruled the following on January 22, 1997:

"... the member for Oakwood also asked the Speaker to determine whether the same circumstances amounted to contempt. Erskine May explains the concept of contempt in the following terms ... :

"Generally speaking, any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence. It is therefore impossible to list every act which might be considered to amount to a contempt, the power to punish for such an offence being of its nature discretionary....

"Indignities offered to the House by words spoken or writings published reflecting on its character or proceedings have been constantly punished by the Lords and the Commons upon the principle that such acts tend to obstruct the Houses in the performance of their functions by diminishing the respect due to them....



“Other acts besides words spoken or writings published reflecting upon either House or its proceedings which, though they do not tend directly to obstruct or impede either House in the performance of its functions, yet have a tendency to produce this result indirectly or by bringing such House into odium, contempt or ridicule or by lowering its authorities may constitute contempts.”

“That is what Erskine May said on contempt.”

Speaker Stockwell went on to say:

“...the ministry pamphlet, which was worded more definitively.... To name but a few examples, the brochure claims that ‘new city wards will be created,’ that ‘work on building the new city will start in 1997,’ and that ‘the new city of Toronto will reduce the number of municipal politicians.’

“How is one to interpret such unqualified claims? In my opinion, they convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and law-making process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House. I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals—and that is all they are—been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them....

1440

“It is not enough for yet another Speaker to issue yet another warning or caution in circumstances where the wording and circulation of the pamphlet appear on their face to cross the line. I say in all candour that a reader of that document could be left with an incorrect impression about how parliamentary democracy works in Ontario, an impression that undermines respect for our parliamentary institutions.

“For these reasons then, I find that a prima facie case of contempt has been established. At the end of this ruling, I will entertain a motion with respect to the matter of the ministry pamphlet raised by the member for Oakwood.”

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, given the precedent set, I submit to you copies of the ministry publication, the terms of reference of the committee, the list of appointees and the government advertisements that suggest the government is in contempt of the Legislature.

I would ask that you make an interim ruling to stop the appointment process that has been initiated by the government with respect to LHINs through orders in council and that they be stopped until such time as you render a final decision on this point of privilege.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On that same point of privilege, Speaker: I want to tell you that New Democrats endorse the position advanced by the member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford and join with him in calling upon the Speaker to make a finding of prima facie contempt. We also join with the member in his request that you consider an interim interlocutory ruling, in view of

the status of these purported appointments before the committee.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On the same point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: The definition of “contempt” is broad and is generally designed and used by the opposition because of its broad nature.

The fact is, the LHINs were—in December 2004, the government approved establishment of LHINs on an interim basis by letters of patent under the Corporations Act and supporting activities, including the wind-down of district health councils’ operations. Not only does this not constitute contempt, as defined by any of the authorities, the argument the member puts forward is patently false, simply because this is in fact an interim or a conditional opportunity that the government used in order to get the wind-down of the district health councils, and it in no way prejudices the discussions that are going on in the Legislature nor does it presuppose a decision of the Legislature.

With respect to some kind of interim ruling by the Speaker, there’s no ability, as I understand it, in the standing orders that gives the Speaker that. There are consistent rulings by Speakers over the years that recognize the broad nature of contempt and don’t try to refine it, especially based on the rather tenuous argument put forward by the member that doesn’t take into account the fact that this is an interim arrangement that was established under the letters of patent under the Corporations Act in December 2004.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln):** On that point of privilege, Speaker: I wanted to add one request. It hasn’t been mentioned yet in debate. It may be helpful for you to know, as Speaker, and for the table to know, that the deadline for the subcommittee members to make their selections from these order-in-council certificates is 5 pm this Thursday. So if it’s possible to provide a ruling before then, it would simply assist the committee in its deliberations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I just want to first thank the member from Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford for making the point of privilege available to me some hours before. I appreciate that very much. Your point is well taken. I will say that I take this under advisement as soon as possible. I will also tell you that I will not be ruling. I have no power to make an interim ruling on this matter until we complete the entire decision. So I will get back to you as soon as possible on this matter, and then I will make my ruling. Thank you very much.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** In the absence of the Premier and the Minister of Finance, my question is to the Chair of Management Board. For two

days now, you and the Premier have refused to provide any sort of meaningful answers on your plans for managing Ontario's books. No wonder we're left with the impression that you're making it up as you go along, which, of course, is exactly what you're doing.

This past year, your deficit tripled to \$6 billion and you got caught attempting a creative accounting manoeuvre, as members of the media called it. Despite this, your third-quarter financial update showed your spending continued to increase sharply by over \$5 billion, or close to 9%. Would the minister confirm that the 9% spending increase was well in excess of the budgeted number of 6.9%—that number comes from your own budget—and that this will be pushing the deficit even higher? Surely you can confirm that.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** First, what the public would expect is exactly what we will deliver, and that is a comprehensive plan, fully outlining our plans, here in the Legislature next week.

The member opposite, when he looks at the figures, will recognize that the expenditure increase that he saw in the budget was to deal with health care. It was to reflect the federal money that came to the province of Ontario. Are you saying, Leader of the Opposition, that we shouldn't be spending that money that's coming in from the federal government on health care? That's exactly what we are doing, as I think the people of Ontario expect: strengthening health care, as our Minister of Health is doing, by reflecting the money that our Premier was instrumental in helping to get for the province of Ontario. Surely you would expect that's exactly what we would do.

**Mr. Tory:** The minister is fond of talking about what the public expects. What they expect is an answer. The answer is simply to the question as to whether the increased rate of spending was something that was going to force your deficit higher—a yes or no answer.

Let's just carry on. The numbers speak for themselves. They're contained in your own third-quarter financial update. We have a 9% increase in spending, dramatically higher than the 6.9% provided for in your own budget, plus we have \$200 million or so in just the first year cost for the teachers' settlements and the doctors' settlements, which were not included in the budget.

Since you don't seem to have the number at hand and you don't want to answer the question, can you tell me if it's reasonable to expect that, with your increased spending of \$1 billion and the new wage settlements at \$200 million, the deficit will be higher by \$1.2 billion?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I have the numbers. I just reported them. Again, I would say to the people of Ontario, expenditures were up. Why? You look in the third-quarter results. We increased health spending by \$828 million to reflect the federal money.

If you look at the numbers, total spending went up \$605 million. So in fact the rest of the budget went down and health went up \$828 million. Why? Because of exactly what the public would expect: We took that

money from the federal government and we invested it in improving the quality of health care. That's exactly, as I say, what the public would expect and that's what we did. Congratulations to the health minister for making sure that happened.

**Mr. Tory:** On page 28 of last year's budget speech, the Minister of Finance stated, "The law as it currently stands does impose a fine of more than \$9,000, to be paid by all cabinet ministers in any government that runs a deficit." As I have—

*Interjections.*

1450

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. This is question period and I would like—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. We've just started question period. This is the first question by the leader of the official opposition, and I'm getting a lot of heckling on the government side. I would like to proceed with question period. I think this is the final supplementary.

The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** "The law as it currently stands"—this is quoting from the budget speech, page 28—"does impose a fine of more than \$9,000 to be paid by all cabinet ministers in any government that runs a deficit. As I have made clear, we have chosen"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I fully agree with the leader of the official opposition that as soon as he starts, there is some heckling going on. I would appreciate it if we could be quiet until we hear the question. Could we be quiet, please.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tory:** Do you know what? The people are embarrassed at you, not at me. Your conduct in this House is a disgrace, and the people have had enough of it.

Let me try to continue with the quote.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** It's not a Rosedale tea party.

**The Speaker:** It is not; it's the Parliament of Ontario, where we need some proper decorum.

The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** "The law as it currently stands does impose a fine of more than \$9,000 to be paid by all cabinet ministers in any government that runs a deficit. As I have made clear, we have chosen to run a deficit in the short term ... and we will pay the fine for this year."

Since then, Minister, you have brought in your fiscal transparency act that, not surprisingly, removes any fines and any responsibility for running a deficit. When the going gets tough, remove the penalties.

My question is, can you confirm that your ministers paid the fines as of June 1 last year, as you promised they would, and will you commit to taking responsibility every year that your government runs a deficit, at least until 2007 when you'll be gone, and continue to pay those fines, or are you going to reward yourselves for continuing to run deficits?



**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** This is very rich. Yes, we did pay the fines, and the public should recognize this: Days before the last election, your party issued a report saying the books were balanced; days after the budget, the previous Provincial Auditor looked at the books and found a \$5.6-billion deficit.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I can hear as much as you do. Chair of Management Board, you'll get an opportunity to respond if your colleagues would just be quiet a bit.

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** We then introduced legislation that would make certain that before any provincial election, the Auditor General would be required to look at the books and determine the state of the books. That party voted against it. So I would say that on fiscal transparency, yes, the cabinet ministers took a \$9,000 cut in pay, exactly as we said we would. But what the public should understand here is that this party, the McGuinty party, will now ensure that we'll never go into another election where we don't know the true state of the finances. Your party voted against it, Mr. Tory, and I think that's very unfortunate, to say the least.

#### TEACHERS' CONTRACTS

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** This question is to the Chair of Management Board as well. Minister, your main role at the cabinet table is to keep an eye on government spending. That's your job. In last year's budget, your government forecast a \$2.1-billion deficit for the year just concluded. Last month, you signed an agreement with the Ontario elementary teachers that will cost \$1 billion over four years—approximately \$102 million of that for last year alone. Was the cost of the wage settlement, now worth \$102 million with elementary school teachers, factored into last year's budget?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I think I've said before that we are extremely proud of our Minister of Education, who has been able to reach an agreement, a plan, with our teachers to ensure that over the next four years we strengthen our schools, we have smaller classes, we invest in teachers and we provide our teachers with a fair and equitable settlement. The quick answer is that everything the minister did had the approval of cabinet; it is part of our fiscal plan. It is part of our long-term fiscal plan to bring both peace and stability to our schools, to improve the quality of our education and to manage our finances responsibly. I'm very proud of our Minister of Education for accomplishing that.

**Mr. Tory:** Perhaps on the supplementary the minister could try answering the question, which was whether the first settlement I referred to, for \$102 million on last year's deficit, was included in the deficit projection of \$2.1 billion made by the minister in his budget. And then I'll add to that, could you confirm—and if you just told us yes or no it would be a lot easier—whether the additional cost of the settlement reached with the secondary

school teachers, at \$61 million for last year, was included in last year's budget. Could you confirm, yes or no, included or not?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** I can absolutely confirm that all of the plans that the minister has come forward with have been included in our plans. You will see the details a week today—seven days and one hour from now—and I would again say it won't be at an auto plant; it will be here in the Legislature. But I can assure you and the public that the agreement the minister reached is a fiscally responsible agreement, it has the enormous benefits of bringing peace and stability to our schools for the next four years, and it's a fair agreement for our teachers and, importantly, a fair agreement for the public. Those finances were all planned for and part of our fiscal plan.

**Mr. Tory:** This is the most troubling thing of all. The fact is that you are the man in charge of safeguarding the public's expenditures and their money. In your own budget papers of last year it said that there were expense risks and sensitivities where you'd estimated what they'd be on a per point basis, as to how much you settled for and so forth, and the numbers were not included in your budget, so that these two numbers—for the teachers' settlements and the effect on last year, and I was going to ask you about the doctors' settlement—were not included, because they are listed here as expense risks and sensitivities. They're not included in the budget. How can you come in here and tell us they were included in the plans when your own budget says they weren't?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** The public may not have heard, "Make it up as you go," and that from the party—I hate to say it—that said there was a balanced budget one day, and 30 days later the point was that it was a \$5.6-billion deficit. The making it up as you go is over there.

Again I say to the leader of the official opposition, I'd ask you to wait until next Wednesday, when the details of our fiscal plan will be outlined. But everything the minister has come forward with is part of our fiscal plan, responsibly done. I think you will see on Wednesday that the finances of the province are well planned for, plus we are doing what we said we would do: improving the quality of education, improving the quality of our health care, and making sure we have a strong economy.

#### FUNDING OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday we learned that Premier McGuinty is going to have a meeting with Prime Minister Paul Martin on Saturday; we are told it's for the purposes of discussing the gap. The only gap that Ontarians care about is the gap between the McGuinty government's election promises and your failure to keep those promises. Ontarians want to know that any additional federal money that you receive from Paul Martin won't simply be pocketed in the same way that the McGuinty government has pocketed money from the national child benefit.

My question is, will you commit today to the people of Ontario that any new money the McGuinty government receives from the federal government following this weekend will be used to restore Ontario's public services, as you promised?

1500

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** Premier McGuinty identified a major issue for this province as it relates to the federal government and equalization: a \$23-billion gap between what Ontarians pay and what we get back. The Premier has taken a responsible position that acknowledges the importance of this province's contributing to the health and well-being of our country, recognizing that Ontarians see themselves first as Canadians, and the Premier has convinced the Prime Minister to meet with him to discuss these issues. I'm sure there will be a range of issues that are discussed. I'm glad that for the first time in many years, a leader of the province of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, has raised this issue and done it in a way that will yield benefits not only for Ontarians but for all Canadians, as a result of this economy's being able to function better and more strongly.

**Mr. Hampton:** I thought it was a very simple question. We heard Dalton McGuinty promise before the election that money was going to be committed to improve Ontario's public services, yet today I can't get an answer from the minister.

I just want to review with you again the sorry situation of the national child benefit. These are the lowest-income children and families in the province. Before the election, Dalton McGuinty said it was wrong to take money from these low-income children and families. He said he was going to end the clawback of the national child benefit, and it is actually federal money; it's federal money that's supposed to go to these low-income children and families. Now, two years into your government, you haven't ended this sorry situation.

A simple question: Will you commit today that any new money you receive from the federal government will be used by the McGuinty government to end the clawback, to stop taking money from the poorest children in this province?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government has moved in a way that no previous governments have to assist children, and the most vulnerable children, in this province over the course of its first two years in office. This province ranks last in investing in colleges and universities and second-last in federal funding for health care. We are talking about improving public services, all public services: We've put \$3 billion into health care and schools; the gas tax money we've transferred to municipalities.

The member opposite simply has it wrong when he tries to suggest that this government has done nothing for the children of this province. We on this side of the House are proud that our Premier will be meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada on Saturday to discuss the \$23-billion gap. We are hopeful that the federal response

will assist us as we continue to aid the most vulnerable in this province, as we continue to invest in public services and undo the damage of the previous two governments.

**Mr. Hampton:** This is unbelievable. It was Dalton McGuinty who said that it was morally wrong to be taking federal money—\$1,500 a year from a one-child family, \$3,000 a year from a two-child family—from these low-income kids and their families. Now we have Paul Martin going across the country, handing out hundreds of millions of dollars in British Columbia, in Saskatchewan, in Manitoba and now in Ontario.

I simply ask the McGuinty government, will you keep your promise to the lowest-income children? Is there some reason? Didn't you mean the promise? Was the promise insincere? If you're going to get hundreds of millions of dollars of new money, will you at least stop clawing back the money from the poorest kids in the province?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again the member opposite neglects the fact that \$7 million from the national child benefit is going to children this year, and more than \$22 million will be going next year. That question is simply not accurate in its presupposition.

The Premier of Ontario has led the fight to ensure fairness for this province, to ensure that the economic engine of our great nation continues to thrive and prosper, so that Ontarians, who see themselves first and foremost as Canadians, can continue to produce the wealth that will see other parts of this country with a higher standard of living.

I am proud of the leadership role our Premier has taken. We look forward to the discussions between the Premier and the Prime Minister next Saturday. I only wish the member opposite had as wide a vision of this country and its future as does the Premier of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.

**Mr. Hampton:** A new question to the Acting Premier: My vision right now is of a Premier who makes a promise to the poorest kids in Ontario, kids who are trying to struggle to survive on social assistance, and says, "We're going to stop taking money out of your pocket." Now we have the prospect of the federal government turning over more money to the province. I'm simply asking you, will you keep your promise? Will you stop taking money from the poorest kids in Ontario?

Let me ask the question a little differently. Before the election, the Premier promised that children over age six would receive IBI treatment. Now your government is spending taxpayers' money fighting against those very children receiving IBI treatment for autism. Will you commit today that you'll stop fighting autistic children and fund IBI treatment for children over six, as Premier McGuinty promised?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I'll refer this to the minister of children's services.

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** There are more services available to children with autism today than ever before. We have



significantly increased the funding. We've expanded our preschool program. We have implemented a new school-based program to supplement the good programs already happening in the schools across this province, and closing the gap between the rural and the non-rural areas as well. So we're moving very well on this file and for all special-needs children in Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** A justice of the Superior Court listened to that argument put forward by the McGuinty government and said it was complete hogwash. In fact, she said you are breaching the constitutional rights of those autistic children. That's where you can take that argument, Minister.

I want to ask about another McGuinty promise, that \$420 million would be added to long-term care for our seniors, a very specific promise. Now into the second year of the McGuinty government, we haven't seen \$420 million in funding for long-term care. We've barely seen \$116 million. Will you commit today, Acting Premier, that any new money you receive from the federal government will be used to keep your promise to seniors who depend upon long-term care in this province?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, please.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** A careful examination of the estimates of the Ministry of Health for the year 2004-05 will indicate that our total expansion and funding for long-term care in fact totals closer to \$450 million, combined with enhanced care and standards for existing beds and the expansion of beds in Ontario.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside those organizations that are lending important support to some of our most vulnerable who call long-term-care home, working to restore a culture of a home-like environment. All of those people who are involved in those sectors on the front lines, I think, would comment to the honourable member that they've been involved in a very considerable effort on a variety of fronts to enhance the quality of care for some of Ontario's most vulnerable.

**Mr. Hampton:** Before the election, the McGuinty Liberals made up the promises as they went along. Now, after the election, you make up the numbers as you go along.

I want to ask about another number. This is about the promise to hire 8,000 additional new nurses. What we saw earlier this winter was that in fact almost 1,000 nurses were being laid off. Can the McGuinty government commit that any new money you get from Paul Martin as a result of discussions this weekend will be used to keep that promise to hire 8,000 new additional nurses rather than firing almost 1,000 nurses, as you did earlier this year?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** The honourable member's tenuous grasp of reality is becoming evident in question period today. First off is the reality that I met this morning with Doris Grinspun, the executive director of RNAO. Doris could not name one nurse who has been laid off. Obviously there is a—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Then send me that name, please.

There is a contraction of the number of hours in some institutions, but the reality is that through a variety of funding initiatives, in hospitals large and small, in long-term-care homes, in community mental health, in home care, 3,052 new full-time nursing positions have been created by this government to date, toward our commitment of 8,000.

1510

#### REPORT OF THE ONTARIO BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SYSTEM REVIEW PANEL

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** My question is to the acting Premier, in the absence of the Minister of Finance. Where is the report of the Ontario beverage alcohol system review panel?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** The report is still being developed. There have been consultations ongoing. The report has not come back to cabinet yet, but as to the Premier's undertaking and the government's undertaking at the time, that report, when it's complete, will be available and will likely be discussed at great length both here in the House and, indeed, across the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Flaherty:** What is the date set for the delivery of the report? The terms of reference provide that the panel is to provide its advice and recommendations in a written report to the Minister of Finance in spring 2005, on a date to be approved by the minister. What is the date that has been approved by the minister, and will you guarantee to the people of Ontario that the LCBO will not be dealt with in the budget before the report of the panel is produced and the people of Ontario have a chance to consider its recommendations?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Obviously I can't comment on the contents of the budget. The government has said that this report will be back this spring. Perhaps the member is anxious to get it back because his opinion and his leader's position on the LCBO differ. The member opposite wants to sell it; the leader doesn't. They are quite worlds apart on that whole issue. That might explain the member's ambitions to leave this place and run for a seat for the federal Parliament.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, as you know, Friday you will be announcing the federal deal on child care. Last week, Manitoba and Saskatchewan both announced that they had signed their agreements. Manitoba's agreement says it will "make investments in its community-based non-profit early learning and child care sector." Saskatchewan's agreement says it will "support the development of regulated

early learning and non-profit child care." Why? Because non-profit is better for kids, and it's easier on taxpayers' wallets. Minister, will your agreement this Friday commit to a not-for-profit system?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'm looking forward to signing the agreement with the federal government. We've announced our Best Start plan. The majority of the new spaces will be in schools. Right now, 95% of the spaces in schools are not for-profit. We don't anticipate this to change.

Having said that, we do need to have flexibility in the system. That's what the rural areas have told me. In some areas, there would be no child care spaces if we closed the for-profit spaces. We have to be reasonable and not base our decisions on blind ideology like the members opposite do.

**Ms. Horwath:** Well, Minister, once the multinational companies hear that there's \$281 million of federal money coming to Ontario, the floodgates are going to open. It happened in home care—we've learned that—and it's going to happen in child care, too. You can grandfather today's mom-and-pop operations and close the door on future big-box operations like Blackstock, like Knowledge Learning Corp., like ABC. Don't be naïve, Minister, don't be naïve. If you build it, they will come. But you can build it right this time. You do have the opportunity to commit to closing the floodgates and making sure that non-profit child care is the standard in your agreement.

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I can assure the honourable member that we will build the system right. We've already begun to build a good system of child care in this province. We've created more than 4,000 spaces in our first year alone, and spent child care money from the federal government on child care for the first time in a decade. And I want to reassure her not to misinterpret my flexibility and patience as naïveté. I know what I'm doing.

#### SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS CENTRES

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** My question today is for the minister responsible for women's issues. As you know, May is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. While sexual assault awareness and prevention are something that we are always concerned about, the importance of this issue has recently hit close to home for the constituents of my riding. There's been a dramatic increase in sexual assaults in Mississauga, particularly in and around my riding. In fact, over the past few months the number of reported sexual assaults has now reached double digits.

Minister, could you please tell the House what this government is doing to raise awareness around this issue, and what we are doing today to prevent sexual assaults in the future?

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's**

**issues):** This is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It is a time where every one of us in this House must do our part to ensure that our communities, our attitudes in our societies, change. It's very difficult to understand that one third of all Canadian women have experienced some form of sexual assault. The largest group, in terms of victims, is those who are under the age of 25.

We were very pleased to work with our Attorney General to announce this spring an increase of \$1.9 million, going to 36 different sexual assault crisis centres. This was an increase of over 8%, the first time they've seen any new funding in the last 13 years. We're very pleased to provide that kind of support because we understand that the work they must do today is growing, and we absolutely have to respond to the particular needs of women.

**Mr. Fonseca:** I'm glad to hear that our government is working hard to prevent sexual assaults through education and through raising awareness of sexual assault.

In addition to awareness and prevention, it's crucial that we provide victims of sexual assault with necessary community supports and programs. Minister, can you tell the House what we are doing to support victims of sexual assault to ensure that they're getting the access to the resources and help that they need?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I'm very happy to take this opportunity to indicate that Madeleine Meilleur, the minister responsible for francophone affairs, joined me in this very large announcement this spring. What that meant was that we were able to fill gaps in some of the areas that were lacking for our sexual assault crisis centres' providing services in French. We know that there was a huge response to that: finally, a government recognizing that there was a gap here.

We provided an additional \$900,000 to sexual assault centres to increase and bring their level of funding up to those other sexual assault crisis centres. So, yes, they're on a stronger financial footing. This House should also remember, in the release of our domestic violence action plan, a significant historic funding for public education in the order of \$4.9 million over the next four years, getting at the very root of gender equality. That is something that we have a responsibility to do, and finally our government is getting at it.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Health.

**The Speaker:** I understand that the minister is on his way and will be in his seat as you ask the question.

**Mrs. Munro:** Minister, the GTA/905 Health Care Alliance shocked all of us yesterday when they revealed that the four regions around Toronto received \$544 million less in hospital funding than the provincial average. At the same time, the residents are paying \$573 million a year for the McGuinty health tax. Yet Kirk Corkery of the alliance told us that many 905 residents must still travel to downtown Toronto for chronic treatments such as chemotherapy and kidney dialysis.



Minister, when will your government stop talking and start taking action to meet the health care needs of 905 residents?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm surprised that a member who until 18 months ago was part of a government would pretend that this is a circumstance that was created on our watch. Of course, we acknowledge that there are real growth pressures in the 905, but to suggest that a municipal boundary is not permeable, from the standpoint of the delivery of health care services, is I think a little bit rich.

1520

The honourable member asks the question, what are we doing? I should say that South Lake Hospital, the one closest to her home and in her riding, has received a \$53.2-million increase in funding as a result of our government's initiatives. Of the 11 hospitals covered in that study, here's what's happening: A new program for cardiac surgery at Trillium Health Centre, \$19.2 million for a new cardiac care centre at South Lake Hospital, a new cancer centre at Credit Valley, a new cancer centre at Lakeridge Health, a new hospital at William Osler, \$46 million for an expansion at York Central and a new MRI, a new MRI at Markham Stouffville—all acknowledgement that growth to be supported in the 905 is important, and more to come on that point.

**Mrs. Munro:** Our PC government increased health spending by \$10 billion. We did increase the number of both cardiac centres and cancer centres by one third. We expanded emergency room capacity from 3.5 million to 5.4 million visits per year. We launched a new hospital in Brampton and gave seed funding to a new cancer centre in Newmarket. We had a plan for hospitals and health care. Expansion in the 905 was a vital part of our plan. Your government has shown that it has no plan, and you have been in office for 18 months. When will we see your plan?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Your announcements do not make a plan. The reality is that it was left to our government to fund the expansion of health care services in the 905, and we have done that. There will be a continued pattern of that, respecting the fact that there is growth going on in the 905.

Rather than take a partisan approach to this, which is what surprises me on the part of the honourable member, I think we can all acknowledge that there's a need for very necessary investments in the 905. We have no quarrel on that point.

I merely suggest that the analysis that they did around the numbers discredits the idea that someone living in Woodbridge should have to travel, as an example, to the Humber River health care system, that there's some problem because you cross Steeles Avenue. I'd just argue that I think that the analysis was flawed on that basis.

I can confirm for the honourable member, though, that in the work we do, we must do a better job of acknowledging the growth pressures that are there in our health care system. As we move forward, I think the honourable

member will see that the funding work we're doing, as an example, with the Ontario Hospital Association will work even harder to acknowledge the growth pressures for those precious 905 hospitals, which we value so much.

## ANTI-TOBACCO LEGISLATION

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** To the Minister of Health: In your election platform, Liberals promised, "We will ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products." Will the government keep that promise by supporting the NDP amendment to your bill that will ban power walls immediately?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I can't speak to what decisions might be arrived at by the legislative committee that's doing a fine body of work in considering this bill, but on the point, I could answer with one word and say yes; that is, I'd be offering some advice to members that the amendment brought forward by our colleague from Ottawa is an important one.

Having said that, the legislation, as written, does give the government the appropriate power in regulation to achieve that commitment that we made and that we stand by. All of these things taken together mean we will have one of the most comprehensive and powerful bills on tobacco cessation in North America.

**Mr. Kormos:** Minister, your colleague's amendment to ban power walls in 2008 maintains the most pervasive and influential and impactful advertising and propaganda scheme that influences young people in particular to smoke that remains in this province. The Martel NDP amendment allows you to keep your promise, which is to ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products. Will you keep your promise to ban power walls?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes. By supporting the amendment brought forward by the member from Ottawa—Orléans, we will be in a position to do that and, at the very same time, move forward within one year, if the amendment is supported by members of the committee and eventually the Legislature—support that I don't presume but that I'm hopeful for.

Not only will we achieve that, but we will achieve it in a fashion which recognizes that small business operators also have challenges associated with their operation. As a former retailer, I can assure the honourable member that this government is extraordinarily mindful of the challenges associated for these store operators.

Yes. In a one-word answer to the honourable member, will we fulfill this commitment? Yes, we will.

## AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville):** My question today is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Oakville recently has seen some great investments. I bring up the \$1-million commitment by Ford of

Canada to my community, but there is another Oakville success story I would like to ask you about today. Recently, the first Airbus A380 landed after its maiden voyage in Europe. When the Airbus lands, it's travelling at about 200 miles per hour and 167 tonnes come smashing on to the axles of the landing gear. Thanks to the skilled and dedicated employees at Goodrich, this incredible new plane and its passengers will be landing safely. Airbus trusted one company with the manufacture of the landing gear for the A380. That company is Goodrich, which is right here in Oakville, right here in Ontario. Minister, could you expand on this announcement and what the building of the Airbus A380 means to the Ontario economy?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I'm delighted to report on the great work that's being done by Goodrich in Oakville. It's another fine example of a great Ontario economic success story. The plant has 770 workers. The contract to produce landing gear for the Airbus is expected to be worth about \$6 billion. But Goodrich is not the only beneficiary. Cantwell, Cullen of Oakville will be supplying circuit boards to Honeywell for eventual use in the A380. Honeywell Mississauga will have 300 employees on their project, which required a 3,200 foot expansion. The Airbus contract should lead to a 20% to 25% increase in business. CFN Precision in Vaughan makes nuts, pins and squares for the Airbus. This new contract will mean long-term work for Mississauga's Likro Precision, another 50 employees. So there's a lot of good news in the aerospace industry, and this is good news for Ontario's economy.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Flynn:** Certainly, the Airbus contract is a huge vote of confidence in the Ontario economy. Goodrich is, of course, only one of many aerospace producers in Ontario. The aerospace sector is a large part of the Ontario economy. The aerospace and defence industry employs about 23,000 people in Ontario. The Ontario aerospace industry has sales of over \$6 billion. Minister, this House has heard a lot about our tremendous success in the auto sector, but could you please inform the House of your efforts on behalf of Ontario's aerospace industry in general?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** I would remind the members of the opposition who were heckling that the aerospace sector is a very important sector of Ontario's economy. It employs 23,000 people. This government is taking a leadership role when it comes to the aerospace sector. We're working with the national aerospace partnership council to further Ontario's interests, as part of a country-wide aerospace plan. I've been working with tier 1 suppliers like Goodrich and Honeywell to keep this industry strong and viable well into the future. This government has taken action with respect to investing in education and in health care, ensuring that we have a highly skilled, highly productive workforce. That is the key to our long-term economic success. We are doing all those things to make certain the aerospace industry is strong well into the future.

#### SMART METERS

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Energy. I was reading in the local press yesterday, specifically in the Brantford Expositor, about smart meters. The article says, "City council wants the Ontario government to pull the plug on its surprise plan to set up a new corporation that would own all hydro meters in the province."

My question to you on the smart meter debate is, will you assure the House that the McGuinty government will not turn over the ownership of smart meters and their operation to yet another layer of bureaucracy in the Liberal government?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** We have begun to have discussions with local distribution companies, indeed municipalities, around the implementation of smart meters. We believe very strongly in smart meters. By the way, most LDCs, I think, share our view that smart meters are the way to go. I wouldn't want the member to characterize anything that's said as being in opposition to smart meters. We agree with the C.D. Howe Institute.

1530

Unlike the previous government, we do consult, we do listen to people. I know there are many local distribution companies here at the Legislature today. In fact, I will be meeting with the association after question period today, yet again, to discuss the implementation of smart meters. I will remind members in the House that this government is committed to putting in 800,000 meters by 2007 and all meters by 2010. We're committed to that. We will achieve it.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I'm well aware that the Electricity Distributors Association, which we would call in our communities the local distribution companies, is here today in the Legislature, and I'm hearing from many of them. The Rideau St. Lawrence Utilities, Waterloo North Hydro Inc., Atikokan and others have made it very clear that you're in a bullheaded way moving forward.

Here's what they're saying, Minister: "Stripping meter ownership from LDCs would have negative impacts on the vital contributions that local distributions have to local government." Another comment: "Stripping meter ownership from LDCs would unnecessarily require complicated new accounting mechanisms to create support markets to settlements." "Stripping meter ownership from LDCs would unnecessarily complicate utilities' access to the very data to develop the bills."

Minister, you know that LDCs have a first-hand relationship with the consumer. Why would you create another level of bureaucracy and strip this valuable asset from the local distribution, all this in the context of yesterday's discussion on Bill 92? Have you consulted with the municipalities of Ontario, like AMO?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** As I indicated to the member, we have begun consultations. We will be discussing the issue with AMO.

One thing should be clear to the people of Ontario: We are moving to smart meters. People like the member



opposite may not want them. They may want to use 100-year-old technology in order to measure electricity. We think there are advantages to smart meters that will pay benefits to both small consumers—indeed, many large consumers have had them for some time. Implementation, how we implement, what means will be used to implement, are decisions that have not been taken at this point by the government. We have begun consultations with the EDA as well as a number of other individual local distribution companies. The decisions will be forthcoming. We will establish a legislative framework. Unlike the previous government, we'll send that framework out for consultation. Many of the issues that are of concern to the LDCs and others who have an interest in seeing that these meters do come into place and understand the benefits of them—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.

### INSURANCE RATES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I have a question to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you'll know that ATV trail associations and snowmobile associations across this province are struggling to purchase liability insurance. When they go to renew their insurance, the rates go up and the coverage goes down. My question to you is, are you prepared to do something to lower the liability insurance for these organizations this year?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** No government certainly in recent memory has done more to lower insurance rates than the McGuinty government has. I will say this: Unlike that member and his party, who made commitments on auto insurance, publicly owned auto insurance, and then failed to keep them—indeed, the member for Welland was forced to leave the family as a result of that broken commitment—we have done as much as any government can do to lower insurance premiums for people in this province. I remind the member opposite that your broken promise did nothing for these people either. This government and our finance minister, assisted by his parliamentary assistant, Mr. Colle, have worked tirelessly, and we've seen real decreases in insurance premiums in Ontario as a result of this government's undertakings.

**Mr. Bisson:** What a crock. I can't believe the member gets up in this House and tries to make us believe that all of a sudden liability insurance in this province is going down. The reality is, under your watch, liability insurance has increased. It has not gone down; it has gone up. People are not able to renew their insurance when it comes to liability. You've got some of the ATV clubs that have already shut down, others that are announcing they'll probably shut down this summer because they can't afford the liability insurance.

My question is a very simple one, and I'd like you to do something about it. Read my lips here: What are you prepared to do to lower liability insurance for those organizations?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I'm prepared to refer it to the Minister of Tourism.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** First of all, I want to compliment my parliamentary assistant, Tim Peterson, who has been relentless in pursuing this matter with those who have an interest in trails. In fact, he has led the consultation on a trails policy in Ontario. In addition to that, the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation has brought together representatives of the insurance industry, led by Mark Yakabuski, along with representatives of those who are operating snowmobiles and, in particular, ATVs to try to find some common ground.

You will know that there was a concern on the weekend that some trails would have to close down because of liability considerations. I can assure you that that matter was resolved on the weekend. There's a reasonable price now and those trails remain open. That doesn't mean we won't continue to work with these associations, my parliamentary assistant and others, and that we'll develop policies—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you very much. New question?

### COMMUNITIES IN ACTION FUND

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** My question today is for the Minister of Tourism and Recreation. On March 16 this year, I had the pleasure of announcing a communities in action fund grant in the amount of \$39,180 to Sport Hamilton in my riding of Hamilton West. It was a wonderful ceremony in the council chambers of Hamilton city hall that was met with tremendous appreciation. If you could only have seen the look on the faces of these new Canadians who were able to play soccer. It was just absolutely terrific. Minister, can you tell the Legislature today a little more about the communities in action fund?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** I would like to thank the member for her question. It's an outstanding question. I can tell her that in many communities throughout the entire province of Ontario, especially in the large urban centres such as Hamilton, there's a need for government to invest in programs which provide recreational opportunities for distinctly underserved sections of the population.

The communities in action fund is part of this government's sport and physical activity strategy called Active 2010, which aims to help Ontarians become more active. The communities in action fund aims to bring about a physical activity and community sport culture in Ontario by helping local and provincial not-for-profit organizations provide and enhance opportunities for physical activity and community sport and recreation, especially for those who face barriers to participation.

So I think the member's question is a good one and the fund is an excellent one.

**Ms. Marsales:** To me, the communities in action fund is important because it's a grassroots program led by local organizations that truly understand and are com-

mitted to providing opportunity for those often neglected segments of our population. For instance, the community in action fund grant I announced will give over 400 immigrant children and adults throughout Hamilton, especially the concentrated immigrant populations in downtown and in the east end, the opportunity to participate in recreational activities and train them to provide these opportunities within their own immigrant community. Minister, can you give a few more details about this particular grant in my riding, and why grants such as the community in action fund are so important to communities like mine in Hamilton?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** The member certainly recognizes this as an important program. I can say to her, the Sport Hamilton project will provide recreational opportunities for immigrant children and simultaneously assist the immigrant community in Hamilton to develop skills that will help them take ownership of the future direction of these recreational opportunities. Participants will gain a sense of ownership of the recreation program, enabling them to support its ongoing delivery for other new immigrants and their families.

I want to say that the member is exactly right when she speaks about this money going directly to caring, dedicated organizations like Sport Hamilton to assist those parts of our population that often do not have the opportunity to participate in sport due to the lack of financial resources available to them and other barriers, such as language. This government is committed to removing those barriers through the program, and will continue to make investments to promote active living, especially amongst those most vulnerable in our ridings.

1540

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, on March 3, I asked you a question in the House where you confirmed that your government was considering implementing a strategy called reference-based drug pricing for our province, which would affect seniors and persons of low income on the Ontario Drug Benefit Plan.

Lillian Morganthau, who is the president of the Canadian Association for the Fifty Plus, has said, "Make no mistake. Any policy which forces seniors to stop using a medication that works well for them will be viewed as nothing more than a health care cut."

Minister, will you confirm today that you have now taken this offensive policy off the table, as recommended by seniors' groups and Ontario pharmacists, and that you are not considering implementing that in our province?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I find it interesting that the honourable member, who, on June 10, 1997, said, in part, "Why has no government to date, at the federal or provincial level, been listening to them about why they are so overmedicated, why prescribing guidelines aren't here, why we're not reviewing drug pricing mechanisms," would now be taking up an issue with that tone.

I had a very good chance quite recently to speak to the individual whom the honourable member quoted in his question. We're going to do more talking on this issue as we seek to grapple with one of the biggest fiscal challenges that the government faces, while at the same time recognizing that there are some medication challenges out there for our seniors. All I acknowledge to the honourable member is that we have a \$3-billion program that's under a 15% annualized pressure. As a result, of course, we're going to be doing a lot of talking to determine what mechanisms would be appropriate.

**Mr. Jackson:** Minister, we both agree that Ontarian seniors are overmedicated. It's the strategies that are going to be implemented in order to get better health outcomes. What seniors are telling you, if you will listen, is that increasing their costs or reducing access does not lead, in and of itself, to better health outcomes.

Ontario's seniors have come to trust the Ontario professional pharmacists in each of their communities to speak up on their behalf. These pharmacists are alarmed that your government is still considering restricting access and increasing costs for about 2.1 million of Ontario's citizens through the use of these reference-based pricing mechanisms.

Minister, you said on March 3, in answer to my question, "I look forward to the ongoing interest" of seniors' groups. I'm asking you, Minister: Will you sit down and have meaningful dialogue, invite the Ontario pharmacists to the table, whose interests are in the best interests of the health outcomes for seniors in this province, bring them to the table, take reference-based pricing off the table and put pharmacists at the table so they can come up with a solution?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** First, the honourable member suggested that it would be inappropriate to increase costs because it has an impact on seniors. Maybe he wants to revisit the decision made by his government to introduce co-pay. Maybe that's something that you want to do in retrospect.

With respect to this issue of—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'm going to tell John Tory that you're heckling.

With respect to the issue of dialogue and involvement, first, I had, I think, an hour-and-a-half-long meeting with Lillian Morganthau and others from CARP. I'm meeting, I believe, this next Saturday with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association—part of an ongoing series of meetings that I have with them.

To the issue of talking to the people whom it would be appropriate to talk to about a policy as important as that, I sure can confirm for the honourable member that that's not just our plan but it's already scheduled.

#### INDUSTRIAL COGENERATION FACILITATOR

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, in February of this year you said, "Cogeneration can significantly



reduce costs for large industrial users and result in tremendous operational efficiencies.... The appointment of an industrial cogeneration facilitator is yet another example of our government's commitment to deal with electricity issues in a practical, sensible and responsible way."

Two and a half months later, Minister, while paper mills are shutting down paper machines and pulp mills are closing, and hundreds of good-paying jobs are being lost, where is the McGuinty government's cogeneration facilitator?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** In fact, since that announcement, we have been working with a number of representatives in the industries that'll be most affected. We've identified 12 sites that we believe are the most pressing. We have been meeting with them individually to discuss what their needs are. These discussions will lead to the appointment of the industrial cogeneration facilitator. I expect to be in a position to announce that shortly.

I don't believe two and a half months is too long a period. To suggest that nothing has been going on over that course of time is simply not accurate. The information we are gathering from a number of these potential cogeneration sites is important as we define the mandate of the new facilitator. I believe we'll be able to hit the ground running as a result of these last two and a half months and the discussions that have been ongoing with respect to those.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, the pulp and paper companies, through Bowater, came to the Bill 100 hearings in August last year and told you that your policy of increasing industrial electricity rates was going to force paper mills to start shutting down operations and laying off hundreds of workers. You've literally had nine months to do something about this, and you promised to do something back in February.

More mills are closing. Companies have announced that they're selling mills with the prospect of them being closed, and yet your government has done nothing. Minister, where is the industrial cogeneration facilitator you promised, or is this again just another McGuinty broken promise?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** This is the first government that has actually talked about industrial cogeneration facilities with that industry. For instance, two weeks ago, the Premier met with the CEO of Bowater. There are a number of issues we have been canvassing, as I say: the most likely facilities where cogeneration will work. I believe this work is going to lead to good recommendations to allow the cogeneration facilitator to begin his or her work when we make the appointment, which I can assure the member will be very soon. To suggest that nothing has happened since last year is patently false.

What I would suggest is, 14 mills closed when the NDP was the government of Ontario. Had his party and his government not cancelled the Conawapa deal, maybe this wouldn't be so urgent. Had his party not cancelled all

conservation initiatives, this wouldn't have been necessary.

This government has a plan. We're implementing it. We're doing things you never dreamt of. We're going to help the people of this province deal with the crisis in electricity that you and the Tories left behind.

## PETITIONS

### ANTI-TOBACCO LEGISLATION

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** These are petitions with signatures garnered at the finance committee hearings in Tillsonburg and also submitted by Delhi District German Home. It's entitled:

"Bill 164 Deserves Additional Hearings

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" through the legislative committee on finance and economic affairs:

"Whereas House leaders negotiated four days of hearings on the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, but 225 people and organizations applied to testify; and

"Whereas 137 people" and organizations "have not had an opportunity to testify; for example, Avondale Stores Ltd., Ontario Minister of Health, Imperial Tobacco, Ontario medical officer of health, Taps Tavern, Toronto Councillor Frances Nunziata and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health;

"We, the undersigned, request that the Ontario government consult with the remaining 137 applicants and, subsequently, this Legislative Assembly committee hold additional hearings."

I agree with the call for more hearings and affix my signature to these petitions.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Could we can stop the clock? In light of all the ministerial statements and deferred votes, I seek unanimous consent that we have a full 15 minutes for petitions in today's proceedings.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

1550

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I'm pleased to submit petitions signed by 109 people from all across Ontario who have written to support action on behalf of anaphylactic students. I particularly thank Lee Perrin and the staff of Honeywell in Mississauga; Geoffrey Smith and the members of the Lisgar Residents' Association; and Raouf Barakat, Palwinder Kahlon and the staff of ICNSS in Mississauga. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas there are no established Ontario-wide standards to deal with anaphylaxis in Ontario schools; and

"Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylaxis in the Ontario Education Act; and

"Whereas anaphylaxis is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

"Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

"Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all Ontario schools,

"Be it therefore resolved that ... the government of Ontario support the swift passage of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, that requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan."

I'm pleased to sign the petition—I agree with it wholeheartedly—and ask Jonathan to carry it for me.

#### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth"—Alliston—"is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I agree with the petition and I've signed it.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** Our neighbours in northwest Mississauga support the capital expansion so badly needed at the Credit Valley Hospital. I'm pleased to submit petitions signed by 56 people from the nearby catchment area of Credit Valley Hospital. I especially thank the McClure, the Williamson and the McMillan families for their help. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are

delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

As a resident of that area, I wholeheartedly support this petition. I affix my signature to it and ask Alexandra to carry it for me.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** "Save the Rideau Regional Centre, Home to People with Developmental Disabilities!"

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in their community;

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to support this on behalf of Don Lytle in my community, Don Wilson, Mayor Barbara Kelly,



Councillor Faye McGee and many hundreds who have signed it.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to submit this petition on behalf of my colleague. It's a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly for Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements.

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

### OPPOSITION DAY

#### LONG-TERM-CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its election promise to our oldest, most frail and vulnerable citizens by providing an increase in long-term-care operating funding and introducing an effective strategy to rebuild and/or upgrade the older long-term-care homes across Ontario in the 2005 provincial budget.

This opposition day motion is addressed to the Premier.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Mr. Jackson has moved opposition day number 3.

**Mr. Jackson:** I'm very pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of Ontario's 1.6 million seniors, and a growing number of those seniors in our province who grow

increasingly dependent on the services provided by the province of Ontario to allow them to live with comfort and dignity in their elder years.

For the record, to put this debate in context, I want to make sure that people who are watching this today realize some basic principles about long-term care in Ontario. For example, the primary services required by seniors in this province, and all Canadian seniors, are not covered under the Canada Health Act. Therefore, if you are a senior and you need access to a drug plan, it's not covered by the Canada Health Act, and therefore there's no federal money. If you need a nursing home or a long-term-care placement, there is no money from the federal government because it is not covered as an essential health service under the Canada Health Act. If you require home care support services in a whole range of those, as a result of being able to live independently, without some of those essential supports in daily living exercise—Meals on Wheels, a whole range of home care supports—these too are not recognized by our federal government and therefore are not included in the Canada Health Act. Therefore, we do not get a single penny of financial support for our seniors.

#### 1600

Having said all that, it's incredibly important to note that Ontario today continues to develop one of the best infrastructures for its aging population. I'm very pleased that over the 20 years I've had the privilege of serving in this House, it has been a pre-eminent dimension of the work I've done on behalf of my constituents, in particular my vulnerable constituents and those who have seen previous governments not speak up to support their needs or, to make matters worse, that lack the vision to plan for the future for an aging population. That's the point I want to begin with.

As I recall my first entry into this House, many will remember—at least the five of us elected that year who are still here, including Speaker Curling—that the government was changed on the basis of an accord between the NDP and the Liberals. I vividly recall reading that two-page document—Sean Conway, the member for Renfrew, who used to sit at the seat I'm at today, helped negotiate that package. I was shocked to read through that document and not find one reference to senior citizens and our aging population. The price of bringing down 42 years of Conservative government was to do a whole range of things, but in a two-page document, the priorities of the Liberals and the NDP were exposed to the extent that this was the price of forming an alliance for two years to wrestle power away from the Conservative government even though we won the most seats in that election.

What concerned me as well, as I stood in this Parliament over the next decade, was that I watched a period in Ontario's history when the size of the deficit rose by \$64 billion during Liberal and NDP governments, five years of each, and yet not one new long-term-care bed. A net new addition of beds did not occur in Ontario. Oh, they tore down some old, decrepit homes in northern

Ontario and transferred the bed licences down to southern Ontario. But the net new allocation, the growth of long-term-care beds, was not occurring. This was creating a terrible situation in our province because of the fact that, not only were we not keeping pace with the costs of operating nursing homes and providing quality care to our seniors, but just as severely punitive for that seniors population was the fact that we weren't building any new long-term-care homes.

Today's motion isn't necessarily about looking at all of what went on in the past, but I think it's important to note a couple of the important features of what constitutes the basis of our current system.

First of all, I want to say that the NDP members of this House and the current Liberal government will have an opportunity to participate in this debate. For the record, we can thank the NDP for bringing in the standardization process for charging resident co-fees and formalizing that into legislation in 1993, and the largest single increase of residents' fees, which went up by 47% in 1993. We subsequently had the social contract that saw wages torn back for many of the front-line, already low-paid workers and professionals in long-term-care facilities. It was a very, very difficult period for persons who were providing services for seniors in those settings.

The 2.25-hours-of-care policy will be discussed this afternoon. It was a Conservative government that said, "We don't need to have a minimum or maximum restriction of 2.25 hours," and at the time we increased funding by \$25 million in order to provide more care for those individuals who had greater acuity rates. The government announced \$2.1 billion to build 20,000 new long-term-care beds. Members of this House will be familiar with the work I did in terms of developing the program and announcing those.

Perhaps one of the most significant issues, something that all past governments had not considered, was that 16,000 long-term-care beds in this province that we refer to as class D facilities were the most inappropriate environments that seniors were asked to call their home. These were homes that were so old that they had four-, six- and eight-bed wards. We were congregating 120 people in one room to feed. This was a terrible issue that had been unaddressed by past governments.

Again, \$1 billion committed to completing the tearing down and rebuilding new, to the highest standards for long-term-care beds anywhere in the province—that issue in and of itself is worthy of note. Ontario today has the highest standards for construction of long-term-care facilities.

I know there's going to be discussion about the Casa Verde coroner's inquest and the issues around managing persons with dementia in these facilities. The fact of the matter is that Casa Verde is a class C facility. Today's resolution calls upon the current government to put in place a program, like the Conservative government before them did, to eliminate 16,000 class D facilities and rebuild them. We're now asking this government to look at its long-term planning for seniors and for an aging

population and come up with a strategy in order to eliminate the C facilities in this province. Quite simply, there are 16,000 older D facilities, as I've said, but there are 31,000 Ontario residents currently in C facilities in our province.

We can thank the Ontario Long Term Care Association for doing the work, in terms of research, and developing a concrete proposal to present to the government of Ontario, saying that this is an absolute priority, and the quality of life for those individuals in C facilities is just as important as the quality of life for those in the current, new facilities—the 20,000 additional beds brought in by the former government.

Much has been said about the fact that the Liberal government has made many, many promises, and they are having an increasingly difficult time honouring them, keeping them and being held accountable for their word. The truth of the matter is that they promised \$450 million, some \$6,000 per resident, yet to date we know that they have only received \$110 million.

I want to quote Donna Rubin, executive director of the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, who said in her report to the Treasurer, "The much-publicized figure coming out of the 2004 provincial budget of \$191 million to support residents in long-term-care homes has been repeatedly challenged ... in the Legislature, and it was in fact acknowledged by the Premier that \$75 million of this amount is for additional services to assist patients to move out of hospitals...."

She went on to say, "In the end, approximately only \$110 million of the \$191 million was actually added to the base budgets of long-term-care homes to increase care and services for long-term-care residents."

It has been highly suspect, looking at the commitment made by the Liberal government in their most recent budget. Now we have a new budget coming. What figure are we going to see that they're not going to actually honour? They promised that they would drive these dollars into the base funding of long-term-care facilities so that those dollars would go directly to resident care, and now we find that they've diverted significant amounts of this money to the hospital system but called it long-term care. They are \$334 million short of their promise, so we call upon them to honour that commitment.

Just for the record, if much is going to be said about how much money the Conservative government put into the long-term-care system on their operating budgets, the figure I received from Karen Sullivan, executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, is that under the Conservative government, the increase of funding was \$485 million. That is a matter of public record. That number has been audited. Quite frankly, that's the level of support, as we continue to expand access to services in the long-term-care sector throughout our tenure, something that sadly did not occur in the previous NDP and Liberal governments.

1610

The issues have been well documented from public opinion polls, through letters to MPPs, media reports, a



coroner's jury findings and stakeholder activities. All of these report to the fact that Ontarians want to make sure that the quality of services enjoyed in our long-term-care centres continues to grow and continues to be supported so that we can achieve even higher levels of care for the acuity levels for the average senior in our province.

I obviously have much more I would like to add to this debate. I want to say for the record, without enumerating the many cuts, that I do acknowledge that the Liberals, the current government, have increased additional funding. It is far short of what they promised. I also want to acknowledge that they have cut services. Hidden in the last budget was a retroactive cut to those long-term-care facilities which pay municipal property taxes, and there was quite a protest over that. But they are still phasing out the support payments to that. They've cancelled the short-term sustainability grant program that dealt with vacancies in long-term-care facilities. So when they take from one hand and give back to the other, it still doesn't net out as a really positive experience for seniors in our long-term-care facilities.

I just want to close by saying that tomorrow I will not be in the House as I will be attending the funeral of my uncle, a veteran, who passed away of Alzheimer's on the weekend. For members who are familiar, I had the privilege of being able to develop our Alzheimer's strategy in this province. It just overwhelms me at times to reiterate the importance of ensuring that we're supporting our long-term-care facilities, that those people struggling with dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other challenges need our support and, in the absence of receiving that direct support, this is a very difficult time for a growing number of seniors in the province.

I implore the members of this House to support a very simple resolution that calls upon a political party that received the support of the voters of Ontario on the basis that they believed that they would do what they said they would do. There's no greater group of people that could be disfranchised from their hope for the future as a group of seniors who are relying on the this government not only to do right thing but to do what they promised.

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I'm disappointed that the government members aren't speaking to this motion—perhaps not speaking to it yet.

Last week, I rose in the House to speak to a motion requesting that the McGuinty government keep its election promises to Ontario's children. Today, one week later, I am standing to demand that government keep its election promise to Ontario's elderly, and I quote from the motion before us today: "... to our oldest, most frail and vulnerable citizens by providing an increase in long-term-care operating funding and introduce an effective strategy to rebuild and/or upgrade the older long-term-care homes across Ontario in the 2005 provincial budget," which we will be seeing next week.

It doesn't seem to matter whether you're young or old, obviously this government doesn't discriminate. It simply breaks promises to people in Ontario, no matter how old they are. I digress a bit.

Today, we're focusing on unfulfilled promises of this government to our seniors and, on that note, I'd like to read the preamble to this motion we're considering—a bit of perspective:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party promised in the 2003 election to increase levels of long-term-care operating funding by \$6,000 per resident for a total funding increase of \$450 million; and

"Whereas only about one quarter of the funding to fulfill this commitment, or \$116 million, was provided in the 2004-05 budget; and

"Whereas the former Progressive Conservative government honoured its election promise to invest \$1.2 billion—that's billion, with a "B"—"to build 20,000 new long-term-care beds and redevelop 16,000 older 'D' class beds to the highest long-term-care building standards in Canada and increased long-term-care operating funding by \$485 million"—that's getting close to half a billion dollars in operating funding.

Things were a little different under the former government. Speaker, you will remember that that was the government that, in 1998, announced the \$2.1-billion investment in long-term care—again, to build those 20,000 new beds and to rebuild the 16,000 beds found in the province's oldest facilities. New beds were awarded in 1999, 2000 and 2001. As of the end of February 2005, 18,418 new beds had been built and 9,191 D beds had been either upgraded or rebuilt.

I can tell you that down my way, elderly people are reaping the benefits. In 2003, Haldimand county received a real shot in the arm with 64 new long-term-care beds awarded to Parkview Meadows. In May of that same year, the Ministry of Health announced an agreement for the sharing of long-term-care beds between Grandview and Dunnville hospital. That agreement would see 128 beds remain at Grandview Lodge and an additional 64 beds operating in Haldimand War Memorial Hospital in Dunnville. That was followed by a request for proposals for an additional 64 beds in the west end, which subsequently were awarded to Parkview Meadows. Construction is well on the way with respect to Parkview Meadows. We're also looking forward to progress in Norfolk county with the new Norview Lodge. That's a \$13-million project of provincial money, depreciated over 20 years.

I'm very pleased with the progress and certainly with the work that our member by the name of Cam Jackson has done in this sector.

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I am delighted to speak to this motion today. I find the revisionist history of the previous speakers interesting, to say the least. Mr. Jackson, in his resolution, spoke of the history of the parties with respect to long-term care and spoke a great deal about the 20,000 new beds his party has built. However, what he failed to mention was the fact that many of those beds have been built in overbedded areas, in areas where they're not needed.

We now have a situation where, under the previous government, they changed the regulations to allow for

more private rooms and fewer basic rooms, although the demand for basic rooms remains the same across the province. Now we have a situation where we are dealing with areas that are greatly underbedded for basic accommodation. We have people on long waiting lists for basic accommodation and we have single beds going wanting because of the previous government's mismanagement of its new build. The demand is huge for basic beds across the province, and unfortunately, the investments the previous government made were ill-advised at best.

The previous speaker also noted that they invested \$438 million in long-term care, but to what end? They did not advise us of the period of time—I believe it was at least eight years that he was referring to—and there was very little accountability with respect to the investments that the previous government made. They also failed to mention some of the things they did do. They removed a lot of standards in our homes, which we are now working toward re-implementing to ensure that our seniors across the province are well looked after.

They failed to mention the copayment increase of 15% that they threatened our seniors with. They talked a little bit about the short-term sustainability program, which was a program they had to introduce to try and deal with the problems they created in their ill-advised and unorganized new build.

Let me tell you the good news. Let me tell you about all the great things our government is doing, because I don't think our government can be compared to any other government with respect to long-term care. The amount of work that we've done, the commitment that we've shown—

1620

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Order, please.

**Ms. Smith:**—the commitment that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has shown is unsurmounted in the history of this Legislature.

When we were elected in October 2003, I was asked to be the parliamentary assistant for health and long-term care. Shortly thereafter, we had a series of articles in the media about problems in our long-term-care sector, and the minister asked me to take a—

**The Acting Speaker:** Members, please. The member from Nipissing has the floor. She is speaking to the topic. I think we owe her the opportunity.

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have thought the person bringing the motion would like to hear what we have to say, particularly because he seems to lack the knowledge of all of the changes that we've made over the last year and a half in long-term care.

I was asked to do review of long-term care in December 2003, and I undertook that review with great zeal. I visited over 25 homes, unannounced and unaccompanied, across province. I visited large, small, urban, rural, for-profit, not-for-profit, culturally specific; I visited with over 100 stakeholders, individually and in groups; I met with groups that represented seniors and that represented

the unionized workers in the homes; I met with workers directly, as I visited the homes, residents, their families, geriatricians, psychogeriatricians, nurses, administrators and the advocacy groups that work on behalf of our seniors across the province. I also shadowed an RPN for an eight-hour shift in one of my local homes in order to see first-hand exactly what kind of care was being provided in our homes.

From all of that I developed a report which we launched last May, called *Commitment to Care*, which has set out, really, a blueprint for the changes we have since undertaken in long-term care across the province.

One of the main themes of my report was that these homes should not be referred to as facilities any more. They are homes. These are the homes in which 72,000 of our most precious residents live. Seventy-two thousand seniors across the province live in the 620-some long-term-care homes in our province. This is where they live; this is their home, and for many of them, this is their final home. It's important that we emphasize that word "home." We want to make sure that they don't feel like they are in an institution, that they don't feel like they are in a facility, but that they feel cared for and loved and still a part of the community. It's so very important that our seniors still remain a vital part of our communities.

Through the introduction of my report, we introduced a number of changes, and over the last year we've introduced many of those changes through regulations and through new policies and initiatives in the province. I'd like to talk to you for a minute about a few of those.

We introduced some standards which the previous government had eliminated, like 24-hour RN coverage in a home, so that every resident in whatever home across this province is entitled to the same level and expertise of care.

We introduced two baths a week. The previous government took that standard away. They didn't think there was any need for minimums in bathing in our homes. We reintroduced two baths a week for residents.

We introduced spousal reunification. We had residents in our province who were living in two different homes in the same city, but because of the placement system that we had, they couldn't be in the same home. These were people who were married 40, 50, 60 years. In order to ensure that they lived in a home, we wanted to make sure that they could live as they would in a home, with their spouse. We introduced spousal reunification.

For the benefit of residents of the province, we introduced a public Web site. It's the first in Canada. It allows any resident in the province access to information about every single one of the 620 publicly funded homes. This information allows family members better access to what's going on in a home, and also what homes they have within their geographic area, to choose a place for their loved one.

We froze the copayment, so that our residents did not have to pay more for their residence, and we increased the comfort allowance for first time in 19 years. In 19 years there had not been an increase. The comfort allow-



ance allows our seniors who are frail and at the lower end of the income stream to access a little bit of money per month so that they can buy a gift for a grandchild or so that they can buy themselves a chocolate bar at the snack bar. This is what we did—the first time in 19 years.

We funded a report to be completed by the activities professional that will be best practices for our activities professionals across the province, so they can start implementing some innovative activities for our seniors in the homes.

We funded the family councils and residents' councils across the province to ensure that we have residents' and family councils in each of our homes across the province, because they bring such a vital link to our communities.

We are also building stronger enforcement and compliance in the homes, and we've undertaken, for the first time in over 20 years, a full review and revamping of the legislation that governs our long-term-care homes.

We have been incredibly busy. We've made some major strides forward in ensuring that our seniors across the province live with dignity and respect.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is a spectrum of care in our communities, and many seniors would prefer to age in place. I heard that a lot as I did my visits and as I've done my consultations with respect to the new legislation and with respect to long-term care in the province. We have seniors who are living in their homes who want to stay in their homes, and we hope that they will stay in their homes as long as possible. To that end, we've invested in home care to ensure that our seniors are receiving the care they want, and that they deserve, wherever they can.

Last week, I had the privilege of visiting Sophie Rousseau in my riding. She celebrated her 102nd birthday on Saturday. Sophie, if you are watching today, I just want to wish you a happy birthday. I know that she had a fabulous celebration in her home. Sophie has a walker. She is completely alert and aggressive and engaged in everything that's going on in our community. She had lots to tell me when I stopped by to visit her, lots of comments to make. She is enjoying her final years in her home. She was able to celebrate her 102nd birthday with her loved ones and her family members, who stopped in to visit her. She is a vital part of our community and part of my neighbourhood. I think that's a very important part of the investments we have made to increase the quality of life for our seniors across the province.

I cannot tell you how important our seniors are. I've met so many of them as I travelled the province. I talked to them about how they enjoy living in the homes they're living in, what we could do to improve life in the home, what we can do to make sure they feel safe—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Burlington.

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it's unfortunate that the member for Burlington doesn't want to know what's actually happening in long-term care, despite the fact that he brings this resolution today. I think he'd be shocked to see the improvements we have made

and how wonderfully our residents are being treated across the province by those hard-working front-line workers—nurses, personal support workers, activities coordinators, administrators—all those people who are bringing care to our residents and ensuring that wherever they live, in whichever of our 620 homes across the province, is truly a home for our seniors, where they can live with dignity and respect, and where the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and I are very committed to ensuring that they do live with dignity and respect every single day of their lives.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I'm pleased to join the debate. I want to commend my colleague the member from Burlington, who is celebrating his 20th year in this Legislature. I can tell you without any reservation, Mr. Speaker, about my observation of what a strong advocate he has been on behalf of the frail and elderly in this province during all those 20 years.

I only have a few minutes, and I have a lot of things I'd like to put on the record. My mother—and I'm sure this is an experience shared by many in this place—is a resident of a nursing home, a fine home: Wellington House in Prescott. I am there on a weekly basis and have, I think, first-hand appreciation of the challenges they face in nursing homes in terms of staffing levels and other challenges. It happens to be a C home. The member from Burlington talked about the need for a plan on the part of this government to allow C homes in the province to expand to meet the needs of the approximately 31,000 residents who inhabit those homes in Ontario.

I've had the opportunity to visit Hilltop Manor in my riding recently and Carveth Care Centre in Gananoque—excellent facilities. I met recently with Sherwood Park Manor, St. Lawrence Lodge and Maplevue Lodge.

Rather than get into a political discussion where we'll have this back and forth, I would like to put on the record again some observations made by Sherwood Park Manor at the finance committee pre-budget hearings in Kingston a few months ago.

Announced policy: "The government has publicly announced new funding" to long-term care "and significant enhancements.... They promised that all residents would have the right to two baths a week and that there would be an increase of 2,000 jobs...."

The reality: "In fact, no new money was received at all until October 2004, and then the amount barely covered the costs of service in place. Coming late in the year, it amounted to 0.5% of the 2004 budget. Carried into 2005, the ... funding becomes 2.5%.... These increases do not include 'in and out' adjustments such as pay equity or case mix index adjustments."

**1630**

Increased demands for care: "From the time of the announcement of the new funding in October, the provincial government gave us about two weeks to sign an amending agreement saying we would use the new money to provide two baths a week instead of the one required now—an addition of 107 resident baths a week when our staffing and service are severely compromised

already." The reality is that the new funds do not support any new staff, although they're placing these standards and requirements on these services. If they don't provide the baths, they receive citations of unmet standards. There are new draft standards, again, without the money being provided.

Food and accommodation: "The funding for raw food was not increased at all in 2004 and 2005, and yet we all know how the cost of food has increased."

The cost of petroleum-based products: There's no recognition for that.

We know that the nurses' association and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union are in for significant increases.

There's no recognition from this government with respect to those increasing challenges that the nursing home sector is facing.

**The Acting Speaker:** Before I recognize further debate, I would ask the minister and the member from Sarnia-Lambton: Please. Thank you.

Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** It's my pleasure to enter into this discussion. You may recall that fairly recently I was asking the Minister of Health about a particular facility that exists in my community that is quite controversial at this time, mostly because the previous government made some commitments around rebuilding this facility and the current government has decided—well, hasn't really decided anything yet; I think that's the crux of the matter.

I find it interesting to hear the members of the government side talk about the things that I think, in our minds, we would all agree with in theory and we would all think are appropriate, like the dignity of people who need care, the fact that seniors and people who need some assistance in their daily living should be given some choice and that decisions about care should be made in connection with these people. It's not just a matter of warehousing people; it's a matter of ensuring that decent quality of life and decent standards of care are being provided in facilities.

The unfortunate reality, though, is that although it's nice rhetoric, that's not happening in my own community. I can simply point to a facility at Chedoke that was supposed to be rebuilt and have major investment. The people who are there right now—as I speak, there are probably about 60 residents of that facility who are still there—have been strung along for quite some time, several years now, by the previous government and initially this government. There are quotes from the health minister talking about what a great vision this new facility is going to be when it is built. He mocked me in the House, saying that I was the only one who believed the previous promises of the Conservative government in terms of their goals for building this facility. He was in the media himself extolling the virtues of this particular facility.

The thing that's problematic here is that nobody's prepared to be honest with these people. Nobody's prepared to actually be up front with these people and to say to

them, "Yes, we'll build the facility," or "No, we won't." So they're still being strung along. In fact, I had Carolyn Bennett in my office last week. I'll be going up to the facility myself to talk to some of the residents. Why? Because it's important to actually do what you say you're going to do and to undertake the kinds of things that you claim you believe in, when it comes to providing dignity and ensuring that people's voices are heard.

It's a dismal situation in Hamilton, and not only the situation that exists with those residents at the Chedoke site right now. Not just that; not just the nasty way they've been dragged around and the way they're still not being told by government what is going to happen with their facility and with the future of their loved ones and of the people who are living in that residence. That's bad enough. But the other issue that's occurring there—again, totally against the principles that are being expounded by members of government during this debate—is that they are not being given the broadest range of options when their future is being discussed with them. At this point in time, they are being talked to about their future and are not at all being told, "Here are your options." Rather, they're basically being pressured, and it's a sad situation, because these are very vulnerable people. These are people who have had their hopes built up and dashed several times over probably the past decade or more in regard to this facility.

Now they're in a situation where they're being coaxed or convinced or prodded or just dealt with in an inappropriate way. They're being spoken to about whether or not they should be making some decisions fairly quickly about long-term care because their facility isn't going to be there for them; their facility is crumbling; their facility is in bad shape. Instead of having real choice, they're being pressured in a very subtle way to make choices about long-term care because the spectre of being stuck with the not very good homes is what's being put before them. "So you'd better hurry up and make a decision on where you're going to be going, because if you don't hurry up, all the good places are going to be gone."

That illustrates two things: One is, the talk is just that—it's talk—when it comes to respecting the dignity of people and the choices they have to make in terms of their care and support as they age and become unable to care for themselves. That's the first thing. The second thing is the idea that the long-term-care system is one that we can in any way be proud of. If, in this one small example, everybody in the system is indicating to people, "Well, you'd better make a decision quickly because the good places are all going to be gone," what it really says is that there are lots of not-good places that need a lot of improvement that the governments need to get a grip on. There's no way that anybody should be forced to have to decide to live in a place that has a bad reputation or that's not providing an appropriate quality of care.

I thought it was important to raise this issue because it's often the detailed situations in communities that reflect, that show, that illustrate what the problems are with the broader systems across the province. Certainly long-term care is one of those systems that is in crisis and



has been for some time, notwithstanding what some of the members of the previous government are saying.

How do we know this? I just gave that example of the facility in my own community, but not so long ago we dealt with in this House—in fact, my leader talked about—the Casa Verde situation. That's another situation that illustrated problems within the long-term-care sector. People will remember that there is a coroner's inquest that investigated this case, that was asked to look into what happened in this facility, where violence occurred, where an older man was responsible for the deaths of a couple of his roommates in this facility. At that inquest, there was evidence brought that 11 homicides of this nature had taken place in Ontario long-term-care facilities since 1999. There were more than 3,000 cases of violence and aggression that had been reported.

It's safe to say that there's no one community or one facility that has this kind of concern. I think it's clear that the problems with the system are just that: They are system-wide, and we need to get a real handle on that because, with an aging population, as we all know, the propensity of people to be moving into these kinds of facilities is much greater as time goes on.

When the jury's findings were released, they indicated that the long-term-care system in Ontario was in crisis, that a major overhaul was needed as soon as possible, and that the province had not kept up with the diversity, the number and the mental health complications that existed in long-term-care facilities, with the residents of those facilities. Eighty-five recommendations were made in the Casa Verde inquest. That number itself is a damning indictment of the McGuinty government's lack of commitment to mental health and the physical health of our seniors and of the residents in long-term-care facilities.

Nonetheless, a number of other issues were raised in the Casa Verde inquest. Almost half of institutionalized seniors are showing some kind of aggression—50%. That means that this is an issue that definitely needs some response. One out of every three people will develop some form of dementia. Complaints about residents assaulting other residents and staff have grown exponentially over the past five years.

As a result of the inquest and the evidence brought before the jury, some recommendations were made. The unfortunate thing is that very few of these recommendations are being acted on. They're not recommendations that should be ignored; they're recommendations that will actually deal with the systemic problems. If the government will take the opportunity to take the advice of the people who looked into this one example and implement some of those changes, than maybe we'll see a system that begins to do what it needs to do in terms of providing appropriate and quality care, and a decent quality of life with dignity and comfort for the residents of the facilities.

1640

What are some of those recommendations? They're fairly basic, and they are ones that any one of us would say make a lot of sense:

—Minimum staff-to-resident ratios need to be implemented and assured.

—Permanent staff needs to be hired in facilities, as opposed to contracting out, so that there is continuity of care, an understanding of the residents and their needs. I think one of the other members talked about having a loving and caring environment, as opposed to simply services. That's what would do that: having permanent staff, as opposed to just contract staff.

—Mandatory reporting by long-term-care facilities on how nursing and personal care envelopes are spent.

—Major changes to the way in which residents with dementia are cared for.

—Finally—well, not finally; there are many more; these are just the broad strokes of it—basic revisions, fundamental revisions to the funding model. It's actually quite a coincidence that tomorrow morning the estimates committee will be reviewing long-term care in terms of the budget process. The estimates process tomorrow morning: I believe I'll be subbing in on that. It will be a good opportunity for me to spend some time doing much more specific examination of what's been happening in the long-term-care system, because I have to tell you that not only are there problems with the funding model, as far as I can understand it and from what I've been able to research in the notes that I've been provided and what I've looked into myself, but there are serious problems with a number of aspects.

So it's the funding model, yes, but it's also the standard of care and it's also the accountability regime. It's a number of things. It's not just a matter of saying, "Throw money at it," or making esoteric commitments about the number of nurses, but rather, how do we make sure that these plans or announcements are actually being implemented and followed up so that the theory is put into practice, and then the analysis is taking place to ensure that what is meant to be happening is actually happening?

Unfortunately, it appears as though that's not the case in the long-term-care system. We have significant problems in standards of care. Before the election, Dalton McGuinty railed against the Harris-Eves government's elimination of basic standards of care, promising to restore provincial standards of care for nursing home residents. He said, "Ontario Liberals are committed to reinstating the standards of care for nursing homes that were removed by the Harris-Eves government, including minimum 2.25 hours of nursing care daily and three baths per week."

Last October, the McGuinty Liberals broke that promise. There would be no 2.25 hours of care per resident. In fact, we're finding that because the government indicated a certain number of baths and didn't deal with all the other issues of standards of care, the facilities are just trading off. They're saying, "Gee, we have to make sure we get those baths in, so we're going to ignore other things that need to be done. We're going to ignore other components of the care of the residents," so that they can get these baths in.

I don't think that's what was intended; absolutely not. I'm sure that's not what was intended, but unfortunately, for the government it's just fine to announce, "This is going to be the standard," and not follow up to ensure that the standard they set is actually being effective and doing what needs to be done to make sure these residents are getting the care they need.

Let me give you another example. The Casa Verde inquest showed that residents of long-term-care facilities in Ontario received just a few minutes of direct registered nursing care per day. So the 2.25 hours of care that were supposed to be implemented, that the McGuinty Liberals had promised, never got done. Instead of the average of about 2.5 hours of care per resident, our residents of long-term-care facilities are not receiving anywhere near that—a mere few minutes of care a day. That is completely unacceptable. We have some of the lowest levels in the whole country of care for people who are living in our long-term-care facilities.

What the jury said in this particular inquest is that standards are required for long-term-care facilities so that levels increase from where they are now, which are the lowest in the country, to over three hours of overall nursing and personal care for residents in long-term-care facilities. The examples go on in terms of what needs to be done.

Funding for the long-term-care system is something that has been neglected. Again, promises of hundreds of millions of dollars of investment to deal with this glaring problem—and the government has reneged once again. There is a huge gap between the over \$400 million that they promised and the amount that they've invested. Again, this is something that we'll be dealing with tomorrow morning in greater detail, but the promise, some people may recall, was for \$420 million for long-term care. Eight months later, in May 2004, less than half of that amount was announced. Before the election: \$420 million. What happens in the budget? Less than half was announced; only \$191 million was announced.

That's not even the worst of it. The worst of it is that, up until October of last year, we still see that even that lesser amount, that less-than-half amount, has not been spent, has not been invested, and only \$116 million has been provided to the base budgets of these facilities. So, not the \$420 million, not the \$191 million; now we're down to \$116 million. Where's the \$75 million in the gap between the lower amount and what actually flowed? It's completely inappropriate. The sad thing is that that's directly relating to the levels and quality of care that are provided to our most vulnerable seniors in Ontario. Vulnerable seniors are being cheated of decent care in our communities, and that's just a sad scene.

I have to say that the long-term-care priorities are not there for the government. Although they talk the talk, we see that the walk is not being walked. We have about 70,000 senior citizens and people who are vulnerable who live in more than 544 long-term-care facilities in Ontario. As I said earlier, that's a number that's only going to grow, and it's really time that we recognize that

not only sufficient resources but sufficient accountability for those resources and appropriate standards are put in place once and for all so that quality of life is addressed for people who live in long-term-care facilities in Ontario.

Another issue that we raised in regard to the long-term-care system: You may recall that the leader of my party, Howard Hampton, brought to light in this House a case of a facility in Port Perry. We brought a group of nurses and personal support workers from Port Perry to visit us here in the Legislature and talk about some of the concerns they had. One of the things that came to light was that the community nursing home in Port Perry was having a reduced quality of care at the same time when the government was making all of these announcements about how long-term care was being improved. These people came to us and said, "We don't get it. The government's talking the talk, but we're seeing a reduction in quality at our particular community nursing home in Port Perry." We wanted to understand why it was that hundreds of hours of nursing and personal support were being cut—totally opposite from what the government was claiming it was doing in the system. That was back in March.

Almost two months after we raised this issue in the Legislature, the community nursing home in Port Perry is still standing to lose about 111 hours of care per week. The Minister of Health said that "all members of this House can be assured that the dollars we have allocated ... will be spent on the provisions that were intended, which is in enhancing the quality of care for those most vulnerable residents."

#### 1650

Last October, Community Lifecare Management signed a service agreement with the ministry that obliges the operator to increase the care for the residents every day in return for increased ministry funding. The problem is, though, that there's nobody keeping an eye on the service agreement. The service agreements are being broken, being breached, and there's nobody to follow up, nobody making sure that those service agreements are actually being fulfilled.

Despite funding increases in August 2002, July 2003 and October 2004, Community Lifecare Management has not once hired staff to increase the number of hours of care, as per a requirement of the service agreement they signed with this government. The company has not kept their end of the bargain, yet they're getting the money. That's the crux of the problem when we talk about accountability in the system. It's not good enough to say, "We're going to fund it and we're going to make sure that we have standards," unless there's some kind of mechanism—and it shouldn't be left to whistle-blowers—to make sure that the investments are being appropriately directed to the people who need the care and not simply put in the pockets of those companies that are signing agreements willy-nilly with the government. That is totally inappropriate, and unfortunately it appears to be happening.



The service agreement states very clearly that “the operator shall apply the funding ... commencing January 1, 2005”—and remember, they came in March, a couple of months later—“to: increase registered nursing staff (registered nurses or registered practical nurses) representing new net nursing time per resident; and increase personal support workers and other direct care staffing representing new net personal support time per resident.” That’s fine. That’s what the contract says, that’s what is supposed to be done, and yet it’s not being done. So the very contract that was signed isn’t worth the paper it’s written on; the very commitments that the government speaks to in this Legislature that they think they’re accomplishing are not being accomplished in communities, are not being realized on the ground. That’s a huge problem.

I don’t understand it. I don’t understand why this government is not prepared to enforce its own contracts. And when these things are raised in the Legislature and the government is put on notice that this is a problem, still nobody is paying attention to what’s happening in that system.

Workers at the Extendicare nursing home in St. Catharines said that they’re not allowed to change the diapers of residents who are incontinent. You’ll recall that, again, this is an issue we raised in this Legislature. It’s a disgusting situation. You want to talk about dignity; you want to talk about quality of life; you want to talk about providing care for people—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Excuse me. The noise in this corner is overwhelming. I can’t hear the speaker. Thank you.

Please continue.

**Ms. Horwath:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We brought to light this horrendous situation, here in the Legislature, where people were forced to sit in their own waste for hours on end because some chart, some measurement, was not reached to its fullest capacity and people were forced, I guess for money-saving purposes—I don’t know why somebody would do that, why somebody would force such indignity on other human beings. Obviously, it’s to make sure that they’re not paying too much in incontinence supplies, but there’s just no excuse for it.

It’s easy to talk about how we are committed to making change in the system, but until these kinds of practices are disallowed, are rooted out, are prevented from recurring, we’re not going to have the kind of change we need; we’re not going to have the kind of dignity and quality of life that we like to talk about in this Legislature when we’re looking at long-term care facilities.

I think the bottom line is very clear when it comes to this system and its neglect. I’m not going to go on and on about what happened a decade ago or two decades ago or what happened five years ago. I think it’s clear that the writing is on the wall that changes need to happen, and they need to happen now. In fact, the Casa Verde inquest

was quite clear on what some of those changes need to be. There is really no excuse for them not to be implemented. I would hope that the \$420 million that was promised by the McGuinty Liberals maybe will see the light of day next week, with their second budget. Wouldn’t that be a nice surprise? What we really need to see is the government recognizing, admitting and making commitments to the fact that having a \$6,000-per-resident investment in quality of life for people in long-term-care facilities was the promise they made and that’s the promise they need to keep.

Until they do that, we’re going to continue, unfortunately, to hear horror stories about what’s happening not only to individuals but to their families. For people who are living in long-term-care facilities—and I know; my grandma is in one. It’s really, really difficult to go there and discover that your loved one or someone else’s loved one has been sitting in their own urine or in their own waste for hours on end, has not been bathed for four or five days, does not have any opportunity for entertainment or for quality of life or for any type of recreational input because nobody has the time, because there’s not enough staff, because there aren’t enough nursing resources, because the contracts are not being lived up to, because the money is not being invested, because the government is not forcing accountability into the system.

While the government has made a lot of promises around long-term care, about the hiring of care providers, about standards, I think it’s really clear, and what we’ve seen so far is that those investments are not being realized in the way they are supposed to be realized. So already the reduced investments, the paltry amount that the government put in, in comparison to what they promised, even that is not having the effect it could have because the agreements are not being followed up on. And nobody is watching to ensure that those dollars that were very specifically supposed to go into nursing and personal care are not going there. I don’t know where they’re going, but in some cases, in the ones we’ve been showing in this Legislature and the ones we’ve been illustrating here in this very place, it’s really clear that the money is not going where it’s supposed to go. So this should be a big concern to government. I’m really looking forward to our committee tomorrow, where we can spend some more time on specific questions around how the government expects to put accountability into this system.

The reality is that in this Ontario, in Dalton McGuinty’s Ontario, people are being left behind. Unfortunately, in this particular case it’s people who are senior citizens, people who are our most vulnerable, people who need this kind of care and support, people who are living in long-term-care facilities. Those are the people who are being left behind. Why is that? Because the McGuinty government has broken so many promises. You can ask anybody, and they have been personally disappointed in one way or another by broken promises: promises to parents, promises to children, promises to workers, and

of course today we're talking about broken promises to seniors. It appears that all those promises that were made, all those things that people got excited about during the last election, every day their hopes are being dashed more and more because of this government's lack of action, this government's lack of commitment to fulfilling the obligation, fulfilling the contract they made with the people of Ontario to fix the services that were falling apart. The Minister of Health tearfully promised legislation, "It's going to happen. We're going to make this work. We're going to fix it." Lo and behold, there's nothing. It never came.

1700

Regulations are being quoted, standards are being espoused, but nothing's really happening. In reality, these things are not being done. It's quite easy to hide behind service agreements and say, "Yes, this is what's happening. We've signed on the dotted line. We've got the commitment." But again, the commitment is a house of cards because nobody is enforcing those agreements. Nobody is making sure that what is being committed to by the contractor is actually being realized by the resident, and that is a problem.

So the tears that were shed a year and a half ago over the treatment of seniors in long-term care have long ago dried up. They've been forgotten by this government and they've been forgotten by this minister. The Casa Verde jury said, "Nursing homes are in dire need of more funding, stiffer regulations and better-trained workers." We knew this a year and a half ago. The minister admitted it. But unfortunately here we are, months and months down the road, and nothing really has changed.

They said there should be a fixed staff-to-resident ratio, something the minister doesn't even bother to monitor.

They also said that the funding model doesn't make sense, because even if the resident population remains stable, the funding does not. I'll be getting into more of those details tomorrow at committee, but if the funding model doesn't work for the residents, and what we're saying is that we want the system to work for the residents, it's pretty clear that there needs to be a major overhaul of the funding model. Again, I haven't seen any commitment to that overhaul.

They said that the McGuinty government needs to revise the funding system presently in place within the next fiscal year. I don't hold out much hope, seeing the way this government operates, seeing the way they are so able to break the promises they make to Ontarians. I really hope that in this particular case, with these very vulnerable people, with these people whose quality of life, whose basic personal dignity, whose existence, quite frankly, we should all be very concerned about. I hope that with this group this government might finally keep a promise. These people really do need your help. They really do need to make sure that your promises on investment, your promises on accountability, your promises on standard of care, your promises on personal care workers and nursing staff, on ratios and on not only baths but

hours of attention and time that these very vulnerable people need for their quality of life, are really the promises you should be keeping. You should be making sure that none of us can get up. That would be the ultimate response. The ultimate response would be that none of us would be able to get up and criticize the government, that the system will be changed, that your promises do get made, so that we can turn around and say, for once, "Gee, the government did the right thing."

That would be a nice thing to do. In fact, I would like for that to happen. I would be the first one up on my feet saying congratulations to the government if they did what they need to do, if they followed the recommendations, if they implemented the recommendations of the Casa Verde inquest, if they listened to the front-line service providers in those facilities who are saying, "You're signing the contracts and you're giving the operator the money, but it's not going to the staff. It's not going to the hours of service that are being provided to the residents of our particular facility." It's really a matter of making sure that not only is the money in the budget, so maybe next week we will all be surprised and be able to get up and laud the government for keeping their promises on the \$420 million—that would be a nice start. But that's only a start, because the system that the minister so tearfully bemoaned and indicated was in such a bad mess and really needed a great deal of attention is still in a big mess and still needs a great deal of attention, and yes, it needs the investment. But it needs a heck of a lot more than just the investment.

The investment would be a start—and we hopefully can hear that next week—but I've got to tell you that unless the report that the previous speaker was talking about earlier gets off the shelf and we start getting the dust off that report and start implementing some of the changes that need to be made, unfortunately, five years from now we'll look back and say, "Gee, another five years have gone by"; another government that's done nothing about the long-term-care situation, another government that talks the talk when it comes to dealing with vulnerable residents of Ontario's long-term-care facilities and another number of deaths, another number of horrible incidents that we should all be ashamed of are happening to our seniors and vulnerable members of our communities.

I'm running out of time. But I do have to say that I think there is hope here. I would like to be one of the first members of the opposition to get up and congratulate the government that they've fixed the system. Like our children, our seniors can't always advocate on their own behalf and they need our voices—both the ones on the opposition side and the ones on the government side—to make sure they get the things they need to have a decent quality of life in their golden years, in their difficult last years, oftentimes. If it's my mom or my grandma or my granddad or yours, you want to have the best care for them, and the responsibility is in the hands of the McGuinty government to live up to its promises and to do the right thing by these senior citizens and residents of long-term-care facilities in Ontario.



**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate, the member from Essex.

**Mr. Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Thank you, Speaker. For that you get another Smartie, but I'll explain that on another day.

It's a pleasure for me to get up and speak to this motion today because, coincidentally, I am going to visit the Country Village nursing home in Woodslee this Friday as part of the Take Your MPP to Work Day for the registered nursing association. It won't be the first visit I've made to the Country Village nursing home, nor will it be to others that are in my area.

I think what we should be debating or discussing today is not so much the specific content of this motion but the fact that there should be somewhere in it a recognition that this government, the McGuinty government, is in fact keeping its promise to our senior citizens when it comes to our work, our expenditure and our commitment to nursing homes and to the residents of those nursing homes in the province.

I can go through a number of things that would indicate that we are certainly moving in that direction much more rapidly than has been done in the recent past, and with good cause. I don't think there's anybody in this Legislature who doesn't consider the elderly, and particularly those who are resident in nursing homes, as needing the care that they're entitled to. When you think back, just a short time ago we heard horror stories of residents in nursing homes who weren't getting the proper care, and we owe that to all of them. The families of those who reside in nursing homes should feel confident in the fact that their loved ones are being taken care of, and that they're being taken care of just the same as you and I would want to be taken care of were we in that same position. We're working toward that.

Our residents in nursing homes now get two baths a week. I, in fact, heard stories in some instances where they weren't even previously getting one bath a week.

1710

We were the first in some 19 years to increase the comfort allowance of residents in nursing homes. The comfort allowance, for those at home who may not know, is the allowance that residents are allowed to keep for some of those personal things that they like to have. It might be a little bit of candy; it might be a flower from time to time. But it's those little things; people feel some independence when they can have the opportunity to buy something for themselves.

I can also remember one hot summer day several years ago when the former government tried to increase the daily cost to residents by some 15%. That was really an unfair move at the time. We took steps as soon as we could to eliminate that. So some of these little things that you can do mean an awful lot to the residents in the homes.

I can talk a lot about the amount of money that's been allocated above and beyond what has been allocated by those previously. You know, we can provide bricks and mortar, but that isn't really what it's all about. The resi-

dents in our nursing homes can expect to live in safe, secure surroundings. We can increase the care for the residents of our nursing homes, and that's no more than they should be able to expect. They should be able to expect a clean room to live in, clean beds to sleep in, nurses to work with them and staff to work with them and keep them comfortable.

But the one thing the government can't provide is that loving, compassionate care from a visit of a relative or friend. There's nothing that bothers me more than going to a nursing home when I, as a stranger, get thanked for the visit I've made, when you know that that resident hasn't had anyone else visit them in the past. In many nursing homes there are good home care groups, volunteers who go into nursing homes and help care for the residents. But let's all remember that there's nothing that can take the place of the compassion and love of a friend who visits them. When we're not there, when it's our relatives or friends, we need to live with the understanding that they are being taken care of in our absence. So I can say with some confidence that this government is working toward that end, and I think we're making progress. With that, I will say thank you for the opportunity to make these few comments.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It's a pleasure to get up and respond to the member from Burlington, who has put forward this opposition day motion to bring to the attention of the people of Ontario the plight that our long-term-care facilities find themselves in.

It's my responsibility, as the member for Durham, to first acknowledge and thank many of those persons both in the administration and the front-line duties of the nursing homes like Strathaven Lifecare Centre, which is in Bowmanville, and its administrator, Patrick Brown. They've had their struggles over the last while. I have been there and I have worked with them to resolve the ongoing relationship with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Marnwood Lifecare Centre, with Tracey Werheid, is also in Bowmanville—very highly respected, a 58-bed unit with two respite beds. Strathaven, as I mentioned earlier, is 170 long-term-care beds. Fosterbrooke is probably the more friendly environment of all of the homes I go to often. I find its 81-bed unit in Newcastle, with Tina Bravos, is not the most modern facility, but it's a very, very caring facility. Wynfield is one of the new ones built under the 20,000 new long-term-care beds that started probably when Cam Jackson was minister. I know just how hard he personally has worked with Katherine Jackson, the senior administrator there, who has been very instrumental in keeping me informed. I have visited there, and visited with many of the patients, so I want to put that on the record as thanking them, the staff, for making the lives of seniors and those who are dependent on others for much of their care.

What is missing here is a real partnership with the ministry. If you look at the work done in our time, we increased the funding and we increased the number of

long-term-care beds after the many years they were ignored.

I want to bring to bear the Community Nursing Home in Port Perry. Kim Mitchell is the administrator. I've been there two or three times in the last while. The issue has been raised in the House, and I'm going to raise the issue here. On January 17, 2005, I sent a letter—I actually hand-delivered a letter—to George Smitherman. I'm going to read it:

"Minister, recently your long-term-care staff completed a review of Community Lifecare Inc. (Community Nursing Home, Port Perry.) This 107-bed facility had its review during September and October of 2004. The final report from the compliance officer was received January 5, 2005.

"As was mentioned in MPP Monique Smith's report entitled *Commitment to Care: A Plan for Long-Term Care in Ontario*, the case mix index," often referred to as CMI, "'remains problematic.' A staff person at Community Lifecare Inc., Ms. Dorothy Algar, has indicated that the front-line staff are often too busy to fully complete their reports, which are used to determine the CMIs. As a result, the CMI is under 6, which means a reduction in funding. The front-line staff are concerned that patient care will be affected by the elimination of five staff positions.

"With the recent changes in service level requirements (two baths per week etc.), the loss of front-line staff is problematic. Ms. Algar and others wish to know if the cuts could come from areas other than the nursing envelope. They have also asked for a review of their CMI," which is 5.4, just barely under. "They feel the CMI of 6 is extremely dependent on their documentation," which I mentioned.

"The recent funding challenge will be evident very soon with layoffs" taking place just recently. I respectfully asked for some kind of review and compliance.

The minister's staff, the communication staff—I've called because of the meetings I had upcoming. They ignored it. They promised the letter. I waited. They promised. I'm still waiting for that letter. It's one more indication of the lack of responsiveness from a government that's become more and more rigid and basically arrogant with respect to the needs of seniors in this province.

I stand, as do many members on this side, behind Elizabeth Witmer and the work she did, as well as Cam Jackson and the work he has done. I can say without question that I'll be supporting this opposition day motion. With that, there are many other members on our side who are dying to tell the stories of people and their lives.

My final remark would be that my mother-in-law, Madge Hall—some of you have heard me mention her name before—is actually a resident of Centennial long-term-care centre in Millbrook, Ontario. I send my regards to her. She watches every day. I've programmed the television so she can get it. I have a little tape recorder

there. I'm just going to say, "Hello, Madge. We'll see you this weekend."

**Ms. Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I'm pleased to be part of the debate on this opposition day motion, which has been brought forward by the member from Burlington, who says that we have to have an effective strategy to rebuild or upgrade the older long-term-care homes across Ontario.

I say that I am pleased to be part of this discussion because, of course, the member from Burlington was a former cabinet minister and also a part of a government for eight years that certainly has a record they have to defend, I would suggest.

We have been in government for a year and a half. If we were to make a comparison of what we have done in the year and a half against the track record of what was done in eight years under the Conservatives, we would see a dramatic increase in positive outcomes that we are delivering in our year and a half over the eight years of the Conservatives. Let me explain.

Our government under Dalton McGuinty, which has been in place for a year and a half, has taken some significant steps to enhance services to these facilities. We know that we have an aging population, but also a population that lives longer. Long-term-care facilities and the demographics are going to—we have to continuously improve the services in these facilities. We all agree that many improvements are needed in the physical structures as well. I want to put on the record the significant steps we have taken to improve the services to long-term care. The services needed to be built first; now it's the service, the extra staff, the extra care that's needed.

1720

What we've done significantly there is that we've invested \$191 million to increase the standards in long-term care. What does it include? It includes the funding to hire 2,000 staff; it includes 600 nurses and 1,400 other staff such as personal support workers. That is significant. Why? Because after eight years under the previous government, we had instead a deterioration of standards. That deterioration of standards is evident in the auditor's report. In 2002, in his report, the Provincial Auditor noted that between 1997 and 1999, fewer than half of all nursing homes were inspected annually. So we're talking about standards. You have bricks and mortar, but you also have standards on how care is being delivered.

None of the long-term-care homes that were reviewed by the auditor in 2002 had a valid licence. In fact, 15% of them had licences that had been expired for a year and a half. That comes from the provincial auditor's report of 2002.

I would suggest that the reason we must rebuild the services—the member from Burlington said we have to rebuild the services. Well, services evolve. It doesn't just happen in one fell swoop that you have a good service or a bad service. In these systems, they evolve over time. The fact that we have a member who was part of a government and part of a cabinet now saying that after a



year and a half that we're in government, they're challenging us to rebuild the services speaks to the erosion that took place for eight years and the challenges we're faced with in rebuilding the system.

We are rebuilding the system, and in a way that is effective, that has quality care. We are going to, long term, continue to build that infrastructure instead of erode it. In those eight years, and there's evidence in the auditor's report, not only did the services and lowering of the standards—what has compounded the problem of long-term-care facilities is that by not having enough long-term-care beds at the time, they carried out this revolution of closing hospitals, of cutting hospital beds, and at the same time we don't have enough beds in long-term-care facilities. So we went through a revolution of eight years in this province that we now—let's put it this way: It had a draconian effect on all our services—the holes it left in terms of what we have to do. But we're doing it.

We introduced unannounced inspections in January 2004. This resulted in 482 unannounced annual inspections, 2,528 unannounced compliance visits, a 61% increase in overall inspections. Why? Because government has a responsibility to make sure the services that are being provided are up to snuff. That's our responsibility, and that was not there.

I would suggest that this motion speaks to the erosion of care that took place prior to us coming into government, because for a member of a very recent government to stand up and again challenge us to rebuild a service indicates that it needs to be rebuilt. So I will stack up our record in a year and a half against eight years of erosion of long-term-care facilities in this province.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** It's my pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of the motion brought forward by the member from Burlington, who has been a strong advocate for seniors in long-term-care facilities in this province.

Today we're debating the motion—just for the people at home—that, “In the opinion of the House, the McGuinty government must keep its election promise to our oldest, most frail and vulnerable citizens by providing an increase in long-term-care operating funding and introduce an effective strategy to rebuild and/or upgrade long-term-care homes” across the province in 2005.

Just for the record, the member opposite was commenting on the state of long-term-care centres in Ontario. It was the previous government that made the record investments, and I know that in my riding alone there used to be three- and four-year waiting lists. We do not have those waiting lists any longer.

They promised that they would add \$6,000 in care for every resident. Well, we'd like to see the plan, because so far, there hasn't been a plan to help seniors. They've delisted the chiropractic. They instituted the health care tax that even residents of our long-term-care facilities have to pay. So they are paying more and getting less. They repealed the education property tax and the vehicle tax credit that helped seniors maintain their independence

and mobility. They repealed the seniors' tax credit, and the electricity rates haven't done anything for the people on fixed incomes. They're bribing doctors to reduce prescriptions and they're introducing reference-based pricing for drugs that seniors depend on.

Long-term-care facilities are facing a number of challenges. One of those which has an impact throughout my riding is the requirement that they maintain a 97% occupancy level in order to qualify for full funding. In my riding, we have a large number of seniors. Haliburton county is the highest in Ontario for population of seniors, at 24%; 19% in Kawartha Lakes; 16% in Brock. The average for the entire province is only 12%. That puts into perspective the number of seniors who are in my riding and who will be accessing long-term-care facilities.

The Durham, Haliburton, Kawartha and Pine Ridge District Health Council that your government did away with worked hard at keeping track of what the health care needs are for our area. In 2003, they observed that with one quarter of the population in Haliburton county over the age of 65, there is a need to plan for age-appropriate health care services, including long-term-care supports and services.

I appreciate the long-term-care homes. There has been a lot of talk today about the number of baths that are available. Just for the record, the staff in most of those long-term-care centres go above and beyond the requirements. I want to compliment them for taking care of our seniors in long-term-care facilities. I'm in full support of this member's motion today.

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** I'm really happy to speak to this motion today, and the first thing I want to do is make a comment that it's an interesting opposition motion in light of the Leader of the Opposition's questions in question period today. It seems to me that this opposition day motion is asking for more money to be spent on services, and it seems to me that the questions that Mr. Tory was asking in question period had to do with cutting services, in fact. He's really not interested in increasing services; he's interested in cutting services, and I think that demonstrates that there's a real conflict over on the other side of the House.

Having said that, I want to commend my colleague the member for Nipissing on the work she has done on this file. It is outstanding. I sit very close to the member for Nipissing, and I've watched her, over the past months, put together a plan that is going to revolutionize and make huge changes in long-term care in this province.

The goal of a responsible government has to be a higher standard for quality of life for all of our citizens, and that means whether we're talking about a citizen who's a four-year-old in a kindergarten class, in a class that needs to be smaller, a grade 12 student who's looking for a place in a post-secondary institution, or a rural citizen who wants the assurance that his or her lifestyle is going to be supported in terms of sustainable farming and clean water. Those are all things that citizens in this province need to be able to count on their government to provide and monitor.

1730

Along with that goes the care of our elderly in long-term-care homes and nursing homes. Families need to feel assured that the responsible government of the day has got standards in place and is going to monitor and fund those standards. That is what we're doing.

It's all very well to talk about the dollar amounts. We have put new money into the system. My colleagues have spoken to that, and I'll talk about it in a moment. But if there are no standards, then we are wasting taxpayers' money, and that's not what responsible government is about. In some cases, those responsibilities can be dispatched with increased funding alone, but increased funding without a vision of what it is we're trying to accomplish is a waste of taxpayers' dollars. What we're doing is putting in place a plan and initiatives that will fulfill the vision that we have of high-quality care for our elderly in our nursing care and our long-term-care homes.

As I said, we are putting money in. There's been \$191 million to implement the standards that are being put in place across the province. That combination of money and standards—some of my colleagues have talked about higher standards, in terms of two baths a week and more personal care needs being met, the reinstatement of the registered nurse on-site at all times, the reunion of spouses, and the requirement that meal plans be reviewed and delivered by a dietitian. Those are the standards that need to be in place in order to guarantee higher-quality care in our nursing care homes, and that's what we're funding.

It has been remarked by my colleagues that the members of the opposition who are bringing forward this motion actually lowered those standards. I think what we're looking at here is that again, on another front in society in Ontario, we're trying to catch up. We're trying to put back in place some of the guarantees and the protections that were removed by the previous government.

So what's happening on the ground? We can talk about the grand plan, we can talk about the big dollar numbers, but what's happening on the ground? I called two of the long-term-care homes in Don Valley West just to check on what's happening: Suomi-Koti, which means "my home" in Finnish, and also Taylor Place centre, which is called Thompson House, in Don Mills. What I heard was that our plan is working. Both centres said to me that the guidelines, the standards, are a very good idea and they need to be in place. Both of these homes had high standards in place to start out with. That's one of the things we need to remember, that there are many homes across the province that are delivering very high-quality care. So for those homes, the transition's not going to be so difficult.

They both said the standards are excellent. They need to be in place. The Thompson House folks said to me that, in fact, the funding has helped enormously. They've been able to hire one new full-time personal support worker, two part-time personal support workers and two new RPNs. So they've actually got increased staffing, which is what we intended. We intended that high-quality

care be delivered by increased staffing, and that's what's happening. They both mentioned that the money for new medical equipment and lifts has been enormously helpful.

On the ground, in our ridings, the standards that we're putting in place are being implemented. They are improving the quality of care for residents in our long-term-care homes, and surely that's what responsible government is about. Surely responsible government is about actually seeing impacts on the ground. We can stand in this House and throw large dollar amounts around; we can talk about large amounts of money; we can respond to the accusations of the opposition by saying, "Yes, we've invested this number of millions of dollars in our long-term-care homes." The reality is that, yes, we've done that. Yes, we've put in money but, even more importantly, we have increased the standards. The standards are being implemented and the quality of life for people in our long-term-care homes is going up.

**Mr. John Yakubuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I am very pleased to stand in support of my colleague from Burlington on today's opposition day motion. In fact, he has been a very, very strong advocate of care for seniors throughout his 20-year career here in the Legislature.

I met with administrators of the long-term-care centres of my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke a couple weeks ago. I have Bonnechere Manor, Miramichi Lodge, Groves Park Lodge, Caressant Care, Marianhill, The Grove, Valley Manor, North Renfrew Long-Term Care and the Deep River hospital, which is the Four Seasons Long-Term-Care Facility. We met with them a couple of weeks ago, and one thing that they have a huge concern about is that the—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yakubuski:** I mentioned that, Monique; thank you. The government and the member from Nipissing did an evaluation of long-term-care centres throughout the province and they came up with a bunch of new standards. All of the administrators agree that the standards were welcome. However, you cannot impose standards on people without flowing some money for them to be able to implement those standards, and the money simply hasn't been flowed. You're expecting long-term-care centres to increase the amount of personal care, but you're not increasing the amount of funds with which they have to deliver it, and they're finding that to be extremely difficult. Plus, all of these new standards are forcing them into greater amounts of paperwork and administration.

I ask you one thing: When you're looking at our oldest people—and the average age of the people in our long-term-care centres today in my riding is 86 years old. Sometimes what is more important is ensuring the political side of things, so that the government can say, "These are the standards we've implemented. This is what we're doing." You've got people filling out paperwork as opposed to continuing to give that personal, compassionate care they are so noted for giving the



people in our long-term-care centres. What they are being forced to do by this government, because they're not giving them the money, is to take these quality people away from their job of providing that care to the people and filling out paperwork. That's a great deal of stress on those people because what they really want to be doing is caring for these individuals, the old and the frail who need it the most.

I could go on for a long time about what this government is not doing—not keeping its promises—but we've grown to expect that from this government. My time is up, and there is another speaker. I want to pass that time on to another member of our party who has also been a strong advocate for seniors in her time here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member from Waterloo-Wellington. No.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** Kitchener-Waterloo; you're close.

**The Acting Speaker:** Kitchener-Waterloo. Sorry, my apologies.

**Mrs. Witmer:** I have just a couple of minutes, but I want to speak this afternoon very briefly in support of the motion put forward by my colleague Mr. Jackson, that "In the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government must keep its election promise to our oldest, most frail and vulnerable citizens by providing an increase in long-term-care operating funding and introducing an effective strategy to rebuild and/or upgrade the older long-term-care homes across Ontario in the 2005 provincial budget." Of course that was addressed to the Premier of the province.

1740

I also want to congratulate my colleague Mr. Jackson on the work he's undertaken as the critic with responsibility for long-term care and seniors, and his very strong advocacy efforts on behalf of those individuals in this province. I think everyone in this House is well aware of the fact that this was an area that had been neglected for years and years, and it wasn't until the Conservative government was elected in 1995 that steps were finally taken to improve and expand the quality of accommodation available to those who needed accommodation in long-term-care homes.

In fact, it was our government that made the announcement of \$1.2 billion. That allowed for the creation and construction of 20,000 new beds, plus we also embarked upon a program of rebuilding old beds.

This motion here today speaks to the need to continue to put in place an upgrading of the older long-term-care beds. I would say to this government: Keep your promise. Look after these frail and elderly people.

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** I'm very pleased to stand up and speak to this motion today. It's interesting. I started my day when all of you were here and engaging in, shall we call it, the antics of question period, and I was doing a foxtrot or something of that nature at the Legion in my riding of Stoney Creek with some veterans. I think we were dancing to Tipperary at that point. This is appropriate, because there were about

200 seniors in that room, many of whom were veterans, who fought in a number of the wars of the 20th century, who are still with us, and who, yes, are looking at potentially being in long-term-care facilities at some point, probably in the not-too-distant future.

When we think of the contribution of those individuals, it's unrivalled by any contribution that anybody has ever made to their country. It's almost impossible for us to adequately thank them and pay tribute to that contribution, except that we must continue to always try to find ways to thank them and recognize what they have done. One of the ways is to make sure that, down the road, when the time comes when they need to be in a long-term-care facility, we are providing them with the best possible care.

Let's face it. Everybody in this room, if we are lucky enough, will probably end up in a long-term-care facility, because we will have lived long enough. We will have survived all of life's many challenges and hurdles and will actually get to that final spot where we are living out the last chapter of our lives. Nobody—no one party, I don't think—has a monopoly on compassion. We all want the best for our seniors, our parents, our grandparents and, potentially one day down the road, ourselves.

Like many of my colleagues in this House, I have visited long-term-care facilities in my riding. I was at one not that long ago, quite recently, and discussed with the administrator, with the staff, with the patients, the changes this government has brought in. Quite frankly, they were very pleased with what had been taking place. They said that for the first time in a very long time, they had a real voice at the table. Their concerns were being responded to. Money was being flowed; services were being provided; support was being provided in a very real way.

We talk about money, but we came through the door and did two things right off the bat. We dispatched the member from Nipissing to do a complete top-to-bottom review and assessment of long-term-care facilities in this province, and she did a spectacular job all over this province, visiting people. All the people I talked to who are in this community know her name, and know it well, and they are really pleased with the report and the recommendations she came back with, and the fact that we're acting on that.

The other thing that happened pretty quickly was that \$191 million flowed out the door to support long-term-care facilities. That is a pretty significant down payment on the commitment we made, and we did it right away—more than 30% right away. Bang. "There you go; let's get moving and let's start making those changes." And it makes sense to do them incrementally but as fast as we possibly can.

I want to talk a little bit just to make sure that everybody understands the changes that we have made and have acted on, despite what you may have been hearing this afternoon. One of the things that I'm not sure has been mentioned, but the equipment and the support that

we've provided for nurses, the lifts and things like that, are just really, really practical help and make life better for the patient and the staff. That's incredibly important.

But I just want to go over a few of the things. It was pretty disgraceful. One of the saddest things that I heard during the campaign was that standards had dropped so far under the previous government that people living in long-term-care facilities, if they were lucky, were getting one bath a week, and that's it. We have changed that. One of the first things we did was to change that and to increase that standard right away. That's just a huge difference; it's just a basic human, compassionate thing that had to be dealt with right away. So let's just mark how far we had to come from.

We also reinstated the requirement that long-term cares have a registered nurse on-site at all times. We provided a set of requirements that will support reunification of spouses in long-term-care homes—again, just something very human, very simple. We're not talking about dollars; we're just talking about being human and considerate—the things that we all would want to have. We required that all meal plans be reviewed and approved by a dietitian, and this again is just a common sense thing that should be done to keep our elderly as healthy as they possibly can. And we increased the comfort allowance for the first time in 19 years.

We have done a tremendous amount, we continue to do much, and we look forward to working with that community and making sure that our seniors have the best that they deserve.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr. Jackson has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

There being five members, call in the members; there will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1747 to 1757.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Members will please take their seats.

All those in favour of the motion will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Scott, Laurie
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Duguid, Brad	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Racco, Mario G.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Broten, Laurel C.	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Matthews, Deborah	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Mauro, Bill	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	McMeekin, Ted	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Milloy, John	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Smitherman, George
Craiton, Kim	Oraziotti, David	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Parsons, Ernie	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Patten, Richard	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Peters, Steve	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Peterson, Tim	Wynne, Kathleen O.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 15; the nays are 45.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie</b> (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N.</b> (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est		Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona</b> (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher</b> (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest		London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S.</b> (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve</b> (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Erie-Lincoln		Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce</b> (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre		Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)		
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parkdale–High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)</b> Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto–Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	<b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b> Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	<b>Arnot, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement		
Scarborough–Rouge River	<b>Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L)</b> Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		
A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.		Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.	



**TABLE DES MATIÈRES**

**Mercredi 4 mai 2005**

**PREMIÈRE LECTURE**

**Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi  
sur l'éducation, projet de loi 194,  
M. Kennedy**  
Adoptée..... 6788

**Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi sur  
la protection de l'environnement  
(gérance des produits),  
projet de loi 195, M. Miller**  
Adoptée..... 6788

**DÉCLARATIONS  
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

**Éducation pour enfants  
d'immigrants récents**  
M. Kennedy..... 6788  
M. Flaherty..... 6791

**DEUXIÈME LECTURE**

**Loi de 2005 sur la municipalité  
régionale de Peel, projet de loi 186,  
M. Gerretsen**  
Adoptée..... 6793

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 4 May 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Anti-tobacco legislation</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	6785
<b>Highway 3</b>	
Mr. Crozier .....	6785
<b>Rededication of Foley Catholic School</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6785
<b>Mental Health Week</b>	
Mr. Peterson.....	6786
<b>Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month</b>	
Mr. Jackson.....	6786
Mr. Qaadri .....	6787
<b>Thorold Blackhawks</b>	
Mr. Kormos .....	6786
<b>Education Week</b>	
Ms. Matthews .....	6786
<b>Liberation of the Netherlands</b>	
Mrs. Van Bommel .....	6787

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Education Amendment Act, 2005,</b>	
Bill 194, <i>Mr. Kennedy</i>	
Agreed to .....	6788
<b>Environmental Protection</b>	
<b>Amendment Act (Product</b>	
<b>Stewardship), 2005, Bill 195,</b>	
<i>Mr. Miller</i>	
Agreed to .....	6788
Mr. Miller .....	6788

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Education for children</b>	
<b>of recent immigrants</b>	
Mr. Kennedy .....	6788
Mr. Flaherty .....	6791
<b>Childhood immunization program</b>	
Mr. Smitherman.....	6789
Mrs. Witmer.....	6791
<b>Anniversary of Ministry of</b>	
<b>Community and Social Services</b>	
Ms. Pupatello .....	6789
Mr. Jackson.....	6791
Mr. Prue.....	6792

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Regional Municipality of Peel Act,</b>	
<b>2005, Bill 186, <i>Mr. Gerretsen</i></b>	
Agreed to .....	6793

## MOTIONS

<b>Committee sittings</b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6793
Agreed to .....	6793

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Government spending</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6795
Mr. Phillips.....	6796
<b>Teachers' contracts</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6797
Mr. Phillips.....	6797
<b>Funding of public services</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6797, 6798
Mr. Duncan .....	6798
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6798
Mr. Smitherman .....	6799

<b>Report of the Ontario beverage</b>	
<b>alcohol system review panel</b>	
Mr. Flaherty.....	6799
Mr. Duncan .....	6799

<b>Child care</b>	
Ms. Horwath.....	6799
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6800

<b>Sexual assault crisis centres</b>	
Mr. Fonseca.....	6800
Ms. Pupatello.....	6800

<b>Health care</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	6800
Mr. Smitherman .....	6801

<b>Anti-tobacco legislation</b>	
Mr. Kormos .....	6801
Mr. Smitherman .....	6801

<b>Aerospace industry</b>	
Mr. Flynn .....	6801
Mr. Cordiano .....	6802

<b>Smart meters</b>	
Mr. O'Toole .....	6802
Mr. Duncan .....	6802

<b>Insurance rates</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6803
Mr. Duncan .....	6803
Mr. Bradley .....	6803

<b>Communities in action fund</b>	
Ms. Marsales .....	6803
Mr. Bradley .....	6803

<b>Ontario drug benefit program</b>	
Mr. Jackson .....	6804
Mr. Smitherman .....	6804

<b>Industrial cogeneration facilitator</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6804
Mr. Duncan .....	6805

## PETITIONS

<b>Anti-tobacco legislation</b>	
Mr. Barrett .....	6805
<b>Anaphylactic shock</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6805
<b>Frederick Banting homestead</b>	
Mr. Wilson.....	6806
<b>Credit Valley Hospital</b>	
Mr. Delaney .....	6806
Mr. Craitor .....	6807
<b>Regional centres for the</b>	
<b>developmentally disabled</b>	
Ms. Scott.....	6806

## OPPOSITION DAY

<b>Long-term-care funding, opposition</b>	
<b>day number 3, <i>Mr. Jackson</i></b>	
Mr. Jackson.....	6807
Mr. Barrett .....	6809
Ms. Smith.....	6809
Mr. Runciman.....	6811
Ms. Horwath .....	6812
Mr. Crozier .....	6817
Mr. O'Toole.....	6817
Ms. Di Cocco .....	6818
Ms. Scott.....	6819
Ms. Wynne.....	6819
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6820
Mrs. Witmer.....	6821
Ms. Mossop .....	6821
Negated.....	6822

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Visitors</b>	
Mrs. Jeffrey.....	6787
Mr. Yakabuski .....	6792
<b>Appointments to local health</b>	
<b>integration networks</b>	
Mr. Tascona .....	6793
Mr. Kormos .....	6795
Mr. Duncan.....	6795
Mr. Hudak.....	6795
The Speaker .....	6795

Continued overleaf





No. 141

N° 141

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

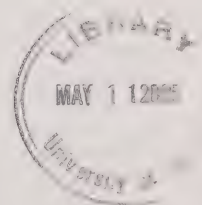
First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Thursday 5 May 2005

Jeudi 5 mai 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 May 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 mai 2005

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### ONTARIO PRODUCE

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should develop a framework for promoting Ontario-grown goods.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mrs. Van Bommel has moved ballot item number 65. Pursuant to standing order 96, you have 10 minutes.

**Mrs. Van Bommel:** I think that it is time to develop long-term and innovative solutions that will ensure a sustainable and profitable agricultural sector and a healthier Ontario. As a government, we need to focus our attention on the promotion of Ontario products to a well-informed consumer. Ontario food is safe, plentiful and nutritious, and we need to market those qualities.

Our farmers have responded to consumers' demands for safe food. Farmers use processes and practices such as on-farm HACCP, hazard analysis and critical control point, to ensure traceability of everything that enters the food chain on their farms and beyond the farm gates. We have quality products that are researched to meet the demands of consumers and the criteria for healthy food, but we need to develop a framework that will not only encourage domestic production and promote the high quality that is produced on our Ontario farms, but will also make the link in the minds of consumers between the food that goes into their bodies and where it comes from.

We need a framework that will make the connection between what farmers are doing and what consumers expect from their food producers. To do this, we need the support of both the rural and urban people. We need the support of farmers, government, industry and consumers.

Consumers dictate what is on the grocery shelves, and processors and retailers respond to those demands. Consumers should not only demand Ontario products, but they should understand why they want those products. Farmers must explore new marketing methods and develop new products for niche markets, such as bio-based and organic products. Farmers' potential is limited only by their imaginations in this field.

Our government can help by creating marketing policies that encourage local and regional food systems and markets. This means developing a government policy framework to assist farmers, processors and consumers to become part of that synergy, policies that provide consumers with information to make knowledge-based decisions about the food they buy.

This, in turn, will increase the economic viability for farmers. Farmers want to make their living from the marketplace, not from the mailbox. Safety net programs should be just that: for economic security in difficult times. I feel that by increasing consumer demand for Ontario products, that will ultimately lead to more dollars in the pockets of our farmers.

We can compete with any other country, but consumers need to be convinced that by buying Ontario first, they are doing something that is important and that will benefit not just themselves but our entire economy. It's all really very cyclical. Strong domestic markets are an incentive to farmers and producers to go to higher levels of quality and production. Give consumers the assurance that the Ontario food they have is better because it is nutritious and safe and is produced in an environmentally responsible way, and they will return over and over again to purchase those products.

Consumers significantly influence the marketplace, and this government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, has the potential to capitalize on the purchasing power of consumers. Foodland Ontario is a brand that is widely recognized, but we need to develop a marketing strategy that will take that brand beyond the grocery shelf to represent a comprehensive system of delivering quality-assured traceable foods to consumers. Consumers can be strong supporters of Ontario farmers, as they've proven during the BSE outbreak, when they deliberately set out to purchase Ontario and Canadian beef in support of our beef producers. We know that informed consumers will support their communities.

Some commodities already have marketing programs to promote individual products, but there is no coordination between them. Other groups are doing research into things such as alternative crops that they hope will catch the imagination of consumers. But there is no common plan, a plan that would work toward securing consumer preference for Ontario products.

There are local groups who have recognized this opportunity and have already started to work toward creating local marketing strategies. One of those groups is the GTA Agricultural Working Group. I attended one of their meetings this past winter and came away with

their proposed GTA agricultural action plan. In it, they explore an approach that will lead them to agricultural self-sufficiency in the GTA. They recognize the value of being near a market of millions of people. They brought together farmers, community and stakeholders, and their goal was to develop a strategy that would keep the agri-food industry in the GTA competitive and strong. They looked not only at their farms and potential markets but also at the other forces that impact the operations they have, forces such as changing consumer demand, new technologies and research, government and municipal policies and laws, labour requirements and standards, current coordination between producers, research organizations and, ultimately, the marketplace, and they looked at their own ability and willingness to change.

1010

This process is being repeated over and over in localized areas of the province or by specific commodities, often in isolation. These groups of people recognize the potential and have answered the call to do something about it. With a provincial framework, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food would be able to bring all these groups together in a common strategy, a strategy that will bring a knowledgeable consumer together with a knowledgeable, responsible and responsive producer.

Health-conscious eating is in vogue now, so we need to exploit that opportunity and create a consumer demand for Ontario product. We need to make it fashionable—or, as they say in the ad game, sexy—to buy Ontario first. Exotic items are becoming the norm in this province, and we have the potential to supply a growing ethnic population. During the greenbelt consultations, we talked about the population growth of more than four million people by 2031. Much of that is going to be coming from immigration and from a specialized market. We need a plan that not only delivers new products to these consumers, but a plan that causes consumers in Ontario to choose Ontario product deliberately, even to demand it. A framework for promoting Ontario-grown goods will create new opportunities for farmers as they explore new value-added and niche markets.

I want to take a minute to talk about our own farm. On our farm, we produce poultry. We have good markets for that poultry, and that's because we are involved in a marketing system called supply management, which allows us to produce to a domestic market. Nevertheless, trade rules require that we also import product. So it's very important for producers in the poultry industry to have the market predominantly taken by Ontario product. We need our consumers to understand when they're buying Ontario chicken and when they're not, and we want them to ask for Ontario chicken.

There's a retail group that, during the BSE crisis, were selling beef. Many people go to these shops. What people didn't realize was that they were not selling Ontario or Canadian beef in those shops. But during that particular outbreak, people recognized that and they asked for Ontario product. That is the kind of support that we are looking for. We want people to look for things such as

strawberries in season that are produced here, and not simply to grab a quart of strawberries off the shelf and assume that they're Ontario product.

The ultimate result, I feel, will be that we will have a healthier Ontario consumer and a strong agricultural economy for both farmers and producers, once we have that kind of framework in place.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I want to thank the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for putting this motion forward. I very much appreciate that, and I think we all realize that to help our farming community, we need to do more to encourage people to make sure that they consume Ontario-grown products.

I believe that I agree with needing the government to do more. I'm a little surprised that this member would deem it necessary to put this motion forward. I totally agree with it, but it would seem to me that the minister has been telling us that he's already doing this. I guess what it really comes down to is—at this point, I think the member must agree with me—that the minister, with what he is doing, either doesn't understand what he's doing or what his ministry is doing or he has absolutely no plan at all to deal with trying to get people to do more.

I think it's important that we recognize and that we put this motion forward, so that if that's the case—if I'm right that there is no plan in furthering the consumption of Ontario products—this will help. Although I do want to say that the motion reads, “that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should develop a framework for promoting Ontario-grown goods, “and the presentation that the member made seemed to include a much broader issue as a framework of how we deal with the agriculture community in Ontario, which is suffering great stress at the present time and, as a government, we definitely need to do more to help it along. Again, I support that principle that more needs to be done. I just want to make sure. This motion really doesn't do that; it just talks about a framework for promoting consumption.

At this point, we already have Foodland Ontario that deals with the produce. We have a supply management system for a lot of our commodities in agriculture that helps the issue of people eating Ontario product because that's what's on our store shelves. A program that just helps to convince people to eat is not necessarily the answer; it's to convince people to eat Ontario products.

As we speak of Foodland Ontario, I am somewhat surprised that as we drive down the 427 coming into Toronto, at the food terminal, on the big sign that is used by Foodland Ontario to advertise to the good folks driving down the highway, there is no specific Ontario commodity on the market that we're advertising. You drive by and you see food products advertised from all over the world: “Buy Prince Edward Island potatoes.” “Buy citrus from California.” It would seem to me that as a government, we would do better to use that billboard to advertise other products that are available here in Ontario, grown in Ontario, to encourage people to purchase those products. But I expect that the rules, as they were set up



many years ago with the billboard, are something to the effect that it must be produce that is advertised on the board, because that's what is sold at the Ontario Food Terminal. Again, as part of a plan, it would be great to look at that to see whether that could be changed so we actually advertise and promote Ontario products, as opposed to a certain type of Ontario product. It's just a suggestion I would make.

Of course, I very strongly support promoting Ontario products. I'm sure everyone in the House this morning will recognize, and a lot of the people watching will know, that the Progressive Conservative government has always felt that it was important to promote Ontario-grown produce. In fact, it was the Davis government that opened up the Foodland division in the agriculture ministry. Premier Davis recognized the importance of Ontario-grown foods. I'm going to take a moment to give you a bit of a history lesson on Foodland Ontario and how it came to be. It's important to recognize the importance of this motion as it relates to Foodland, because I think what's really being asked for in the motion is to do for the rest of agriculture what Premier Davis did for the produce people. For those of you who don't spend all your time researching the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Web site, I'll read some of the information that is available to our consumers.

Foodland Ontario, founded in 1977, was, and still is today, a consumer promotion program where the ministry works with Ontario produce growers to help them achieve maximum penetration of the Ontario market for provincially grown fresh fruit and vegetables.

One of the main objectives of the program is to encourage consumer intent to purchase Ontario produce. Their goal is to keep purchasing at the 80%-plus threshold, which helps Ontario growers maximize their market share.

Although Foodland works with all agriculture sectors, efforts are concentrated in the area of fresh fruits and vegetables, since this area is subject to the greatest challenge in the market and has a limited ability to respond due to resource restrictions.

To achieve the market objective, Foodland communicates the benefits of Ontario produce, encourages the purchase of Ontario produce, coordinates promotion and research activities with producer organizations and industry stakeholders, and promotes the Ontario brand.

Foodland Ontario consists of five program components: consumer advertising, retail marketing, public relations, trade liaison and market research. All components work in a complementary fashion to address a common target market: the primary and secondary food purchaser.

During the life of the Foodland program, the target market has evolved from the principal grocery shopper, mothers 25 to 49, to adults 25 to 64 years. The latter definition includes both males and females and reflects recent research that food buying is a shared activity. Many households have two principal grocery shoppers.

1020

When the Foodland program began, the advertising message informed consumers of the wide variety and

availability of Ontario-grown food products. Both the theme line "Good things grow in Ontario" and the Foodland Ontario symbol encourage consumers to buy Ontario by promoting and identifying quality Ontario products. The advertising message evolved further to include economic benefits and commodity-specific attributes. In 1986 the slogan "Good things grow in Ontario" gave way to the more competitive slogan "Ontario: There's no taste like home," in order to better communicate the single most important Ontario food benefit: taste.

Consumer communications have evolved a two-pronged promotion approach, focusing on taste through community-specific messages and a local/home message. The introduction of Foodland's television commercials in 1997 supported a two-pronged strategy, the first of which reinforced the attributes of buying fresh, high-quality, locally grown produce and introduced a new theme, "Invite Ontario home for dinner." These commercials expanded Ontario's close and local message to mean more than distance: strong values, strong community, and trust.

The second stage of this campaign builds on the attributes of buying fresh, locally grown, high-quality produce. It focuses on the more subtle element of trust. "Trust" refers to trust in Ontario's farmers, in their products and in their contribution to the fabric of Ontario's society and economy.

When the Foodland program began, the advertising message informed consumers of the wide variety and availability of Ontario-grown food products. But both the theme line "Good things grow in Ontario" and the Foodland Ontario symbol encouraged consumers to buy Ontario by promoting and identifying quality Ontario products.

Retail marketing identifies and promotes Ontario foods in grocery stores through the distribution of point-of-purchase material and in-store promotions to 1,600 stores across the province by Foodland retail representatives. Thanks to the full retail support, food stores continue to be the main source of awareness of the Foodland Ontario symbol. An annual retailer awards program recognizes the contributions of retailers to the program.

Public relations encourages media support for Ontario-grown food products through the development and distribution of media releases, newsletters and broadcast appearances. Consumer publications and other promotional activities are also developed to support Ontario food products. In trade liaison, Foodland Ontario works closely with commodity groups and associations to share information and encourage co-operation and participation in specific activities and the use of Foodland symbols in their own marketing efforts.

That ends the history lesson. I think the Davis government got it right when they decided to brand Ontario produce as the best that people can buy. I agree with the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex that we should be promoting Ontario eggs, beef, lamb, pork, chicken—and I could go on for 10 minutes on all the other Ontario-

grown goods that we should be promoting through Foodland Ontario or a similar type of program.

I know my colleagues would also like to speak to this. At this point, I would like to say that I think the motion very much addresses the issue that we need to expand a Foodland Ontario-type program for all the things that are produced in agriculture.

Last but not least, it's great to set up a framework to do that for all Ontario products, but the thing that makes it work is the funding for it. I do not share the confidence of the member who introduced the motion that the government will put enough money into the budget coming up next Wednesday to expand that program. Many of the other commodities have asked the minister in the past to include their products in the Foodland program, but it can't be done at the expense of the program that's successfully running now for the produce; it requires more funding to make this program work on behalf of all agriculture in Ontario.

I commend the member. I ask all members of the House to vote for this motion and to encourage the Treasurer and Minister of Finance to put enough money in there to make it work.

**Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the debate this morning, and I want to compliment my colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for putting the motion forward that the government of Ontario should develop a framework for promoting Ontario-grown goods.

What better place to make a confession than right here in the Parliament Building? I will tell you that, as the member for the Niagara Falls riding and having spent 13 years on city council, much of my time was involved with economic development, and that was tourism. That was the economic development in our community.

When I first ran for office—the riding covers Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Thorold South—I never realized how important that economic development of agriculture was to Niagara-on-the-Lake. I didn't realize the significance of a \$1.3-billion industry and how it affected not only Niagara-on-the-Lake but the Niagara region and the province of Ontario, and how important the economic health of the farm industry was going to be to build sustainable support for our greenbelt policies. Now I know. I have the honour and, more importantly, the trust to represent one of the most important agricultural districts in Canada, and that's why I'm so delighted to have the opportunity to address the assembly.

I will tell you that the greenbelt hearings were an eye-opener to me. They were an exciting time. I was really proud the other day when the regional chair attended our Niagara Week event and stood in front of many of the MPPs from our caucus and other caucuses, and many of the ministers, and proudly said that he and the region were in support of the greenbelt. That was fabulous to hear, although I'd always heard that unofficially.

When I was first elected, one of the very first things I did was to invite the farmers to come down and meet with me at a town hall meeting. I expected 20 or 30; I

wasn't sure what the results would be. I expected maybe a half-hour meeting. We arranged for it at Niagara College. One hundred and twenty-five farmers came out, and three hours later we were still talking. I learned so much from those people in those three hours. Two things I learned: number one and number one. Their number one was the issue of economic viability, and number two—but I say it's number one as well—was, "Buy Ontario first." They must have hammered that into me for three hours.

Promoting Ontario goods and beverages is particularly important to the Niagara and Niagara-on-the-Lake farming community. Did you know that they are the largest and most productive per acre agricultural land in Ontario? Did you know how big the greenhouse industry is? Did you know that the tender fruit industry is huge in our area? Just drive down there through the summer and you'll see all the fruit stands and you'll have a chance to sample some of the greatest produce in all of Canada. Did you know how big the wine industry is?

It is time for long-term and innovative solutions that will ensure a sustainable and profitable agricultural sector in Ontario. The number-one concern of the growers of the Niagara Peninsula is economic viability and sustainability. I want to tell you that foreign markets are being closed off to Ontario because of huge farm-gate and backdoor subsidies in other countries. We've already lost the grape juice industry, and we're in danger of losing the tender fruit industry. We must sell our products at home. If we can't sell them at home, where else can we sell them? The alternative is not acceptable.

Ontario growers produce world-class food and wines, and these qualities need to be properly marketed at home. Just opening up a few fruit stands or VQA stores doesn't work. Marketing isn't just about a flyer or two during harvest season or a bottle of wine or two advertised in the LCBO publication; marketing development is a serious business. As my colleague said, it's a sexy business. It's the business of this government, and it has to start at home. In order to achieve this, the government of Ontario needs to focus our attention on the promotion of Ontario products and the elimination of artificial barriers to local markets. We must provide better and stronger promotional programs and better access to shelf space for home-grown products, and the sooner the better.

The Ontario government—our government—needs to develop a visible and supportable framework that will enable us to encourage domestic production and promote our high-quality products of fruits, vegetables and wine. Through this type of framework there is a great potential to contribute to a healthy, prosperous economy, and it's time to act. Consumers here in Ontario have the potential to significantly influence the agricultural marketplace. This government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, needs to continue to capitalize on the power that consumers hold and work toward establishing a marketing brand for Ontario products. A "Buy Ontario First" marketing strategy is an integral component of achieving a sustainable agri-food system. The marketing



strategy must work toward changing consumer preferences and creating the demand for Ontario products, like our world-class VQA wines.

1030

I'll tell you, as a non-drinker, my knowledge of wine, liquor or beer is very limited. I was quite surprised, shortly after being elected, sitting with the grape growers, who explained to me that a bottle of wine that's labelled "Ontario" can have as little as 20% of grapes from Ontario and as much as 80% of foreign grapes from Chile. When I travel around, I carry these two bottles of wine and I ask people that question, "How much is from Ontario?" They're quite shocked when I quote them that figure.

The marketing strategy we have to work toward is something that will benefit all of us. In order for this to occur, our government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the LCBO, needs to create policies that will foster a marketing system that brings locally and regionally produced food and beverages to the consumer.

I was particularly proud that recently, through the efforts of a number of ministers—Minister Jim Watson, Minister Bradley, Minister Sorbara, Minister Cordiano, and a number of MPPs in areas that have this type of industry—we've formed a wine caucus. We met for the first time—a very productive caucus. I think it was fabulous that we all got into the same room and had a chance to express our views, our concerns and our ideas, but we did it collectively. That was just the start. I talked to Minister Watson the other day and that caucus is going to continue, and we have a number of things that we're working on.

Developing and expanding markets is one of the keys to improving the profitability of farmers and ensuring long-term viability in the industry. What that brings me back to is the Niagara growers, the ones who came into my first town hall meeting, who complained that the current practices they've been under for a number of years were promoting foreign grain subsidy products. They told me that something is wrong and they said it's time it was fixed.

I'm pleased to support this motion, a great motion, and I ask the House to support it as well.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** It's a pleasure to stand today in support of the motion brought forward by my colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should develop a framework for promoting Ontario-grown goods.

It was mentioned before by the member for Oxford that Foodland Ontario is set up and is doing a good job of promoting Ontario produce. It's a consumer protection program of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and its main objective is to maintain an 80%-plus threshold for Ontario produce and its content. So I think it is successful, but, yes, you're right, we need to do more to promote locally grown products.

Last week, I believe it was, FarmGate5 was here. That's a group of supporters of Ontario's dairy and

poultry farmers who feel strongly that Canada's government must continue to work to support a balanced trade position in the WTO. It brings together people and organizations that believe in a strong agricultural sector and a prosperous food industry. That is an example of a large organization.

Locally, in my riding, there are two terrific examples of how to promote locally grown products. I know of Kawartha Choice Farmland Foods, involving Peterborough city and Peterborough county, and the member from Peterborough spoke in the Legislature about that. It promotes a wide variety of products grown and produced in the Kawartha region. They quickly moved from a "Buy Local Beef" campaign to include other products. It's had a wide range of support from the chamber of commerce and producers and local businesspeople. So it is a great initiative. I was pleased to be there on April 20 for their "BBQ in a Bag" launch, to do more promotion of that area. There, you can buy everything from beef, emu and elk to buffalo, and there's even a winery in Buckhorn that is in their group. So it's a great initiative.

In the city of Kawartha Lakes, we have Kawartha FarmFresh, which was launched last year. They had a VIP farm tour to promote more awareness for the politicians. It was hosted by Great North Premium Foods, Sunderland Co-op, the beef farm operation of Paul and Robin Brown, who had us for lunch. Margaret Cunningham, Carolyn Puterbaugh and David Amos of the city of Kawartha Lakes have done a great job in promoting that.

It was in the Victoria Haliburton Federation of Agriculture, the fact that more than \$86 million is generated in farmgate sales in the city of Kawartha Lakes. So the focus is on the importance of agriculture to economic development and on striving to impress upon people that they should buy locally. I know the farmers' markets are soon to start up. Kawartha FarmFresh has brought a lot of farmers together. They have their labelling, as does Kawartha Choice, so that people go into stores, or if there's a sign on the end of the farmgate, people will stop in, and not just our locals; we're trying to attract tourists, who have already started to come into the area. Both of these local initiatives have Web sites that people can tap into. I know that Kawartha Choice is [www.kawartha.choice.com](http://www.kawartha.choice.com), and Kawartha FarmFresh is [www.kawarthafarmfresh.com](http://www.kawarthafarmfresh.com).

This is a great local initiative. I support the member's motion here today. I think that we can't do enough to educate our young people on the importance of food and food safety in Ontario. If we can spur economic development and do anything more to support our farmers locally, we should be doing that. The intent is great, brought on by a very strong member who's been promoting the agricultural sector. What we would like to see in the budget, as my colleague from Oxford mentioned, is some money to go forth to support our farmers.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I really appreciate an opportunity to participate in this debate, and I want to congratulate our good friend Mrs. Van Bommel for bringing this resolution forward. I first of all want to say it's been a pleasure working with her over the

last year and a half in the Legislature. I find her to be quite a reasonable person to work with, and you can put that in your election leaflet; all right? So I've said something nice now.

Listen, a couple of things: I'm going come at this, obviously, from the perspective of the area that I represent, which is northern Ontario. I just want to say up front that I support the motion; I think the motion makes infinite sense. We should be doing all we can to promote the purchase of Ontario goods within the province. That makes ultimate sense. I think the more we say about that, we're just going to convince ourselves, so I support that.

I want to talk about a couple of things in regard to agriculture from the perspective of northern Ontario. I'm going to start from the far north, up on James Bay. There used to be a time many, many years ago—which is not some of the best history we have in northern Ontario, but nonetheless, it is part of our history—where at one point there was a small amount of agriculture happening in communities like Fort Albany and others. Now, unfortunately it was farming around residential schools, and I wouldn't advocate that we go back there again.

The point here is that what the Catholics and Anglicans learned is that in order to provide food on the table for the people in their care, there was an opportunity to do some farming in places like Fort Albany or Kashechewan or Attawapiskat. In fact, there still is a gentleman up in Attawapiskat who has a bit of a potato farm. It's not a farm as we know it in southern Ontario, meaning Timmins or Sarnia or wherever it might be, but a particular gentleman cultivates potatoes on the big island out in James Bay, the one next to Attawapiskat. Look at the map: Akimiski. I never say it right. The point is that there is a potential to do a certain amount of farming in communities like that.

What I would implore this government to do is to open a dialogue with First Nations about what we can do provincially in order to support those First Nations to provide some of their own food by way of farming or livestock. There's really never been any attention by the federal government to this particular item and this particular issue. I think it's a real shame because, as we know, we have high levels of unemployment in those communities. If you go to any of our communities across northern Ontario, north of Highway 11—the fly-in communities, as we call them—unemployment levels are anywhere from 90% to 95%. That creates, along with everything else in the community, a certain sense of despair. I think one of the things that we could do, which is not going resolve the 90% to 95% unemployment issue but would certainly give the community an opportunity to care for itself a little better, is to do something about providing some funding in order to assist those individuals or band councils who are interested in doing something when it comes to some form of agricultural activity within or around their community. As we know, the Mushkegowuk Cree up in the northeastern coast of James Bay, or the Crees further inland, were hunter-gatherers, and have basically survived for the millennium

living off the land. But they've done it from the perspective of gathering, either when it comes to fish or when it comes to game. There was also a certain amount of food that they were able to get off the land, berries and different things.

1040

All I'm saying is that we have never looked at this very seriously. One thing that would be interesting to do is for the Ministry of Agriculture to sit down with some of the First Nations individuals, probably at the band council level or the tribal level, or even within NAN itself, Nishnawbe Aski, in order to talk about, is there a possibility of creating some sort of pilot program that would allow a First Nation, or individuals in a First Nation who were interested, to start growing potatoes, to maybe keep and raise chickens, or whatever it might be? I don't know what the possibilities are, but I'm sure they're there. The problem is, the community—the band council, the tribal council or the individual—has no money. Let's be real clear. We're talking 95% unemployment. There's not a lot of disposable cash; whatever cash they've got goes to trying to survive.

So there may be an opportunity, in order to provide somebody with a bit of a business opportunity within their own community, to grow some of the food that would go into the food chain for that community, that would create a business opportunity for an individual, and/or you could approach it from the community farming perspective, where people are able to do something. We know things like carrots, lettuce, beets, potatoes and certainly some livestock could be cared for in the James Bay or northwestern part of the province. I would urge the government: If we're talking about trying to encourage the use of goods grown and produced in Ontario, we should look as well at what is possible in the far north.

On the issue of the far north and First Nations communities, I want to say again—because any time I get a chance to say this, I want to say it over and over again so people get it—the federal government drops the ball when it comes to First Nations. They're terrible. They're absolutely terrible. If the federal government were to be measured as far as its success or its diligence when it comes to dealing with First Nations communities, they would rate very, very low on whatever rating you create. I've travelled the world and I've seen some places that have poverty, and we can compare some of that to what's right here in our own backyard. The basic problem is that the federal government just doesn't get it. They think that because those communities are isolated and out of the way, they can throw a couple of dollars, through what's called Indian Affairs—INAC, as we refer to it—and somehow issues will go away. I'll give you just one good example.

Last week I had the opportunity to fly up to Kashechewan with Minister Kwinter, the minister responsible for community safety. I want to, on the record again, thank him for coming up. He was very responsive. The issue? There was a flood. Minister Kwinter went up, and as he was there he noticed what was going on in the com-



munity. When he came out, we had a bit of a chat. The minister said, "My God, Gilles, I can't believe that these communities are in that shape. That's terrible." They've been on a boil-water advisory off and on for the last eight years. Do you know why? Because the federal government doesn't provide the money to train the water plant operators. The same situation that killed people in Walkerton, we're allowing to happen every day in our First Nations communities.

Now, we've managed piecemeal to find some solutions. For example, in the community of Attawapiskat, which is north of Kashechewan, we managed to wangle some money out of the federal government, after a whole bunch of effort on the part of the previous band council and myself and the then federal member. We got money from INAC only after we twisted their arm and embarrassed them to provide dollars to have plant operators trained so they could run their water system. It took a year. They did very heavy training. The community of Attawapiskat now—you can go there, turn on the tap and drink the water and not fear for your life. If you go to Kashechewan, it's not the same. So the federal government sees one community's needs in Attawapiskat, but it's not prepared to see the needs of another community farther south. Kashechewan is not the only community under a boil-water advisory.

My point is, as it relates to this debate, that the federal government just doesn't get it. One of the things we have to decide here in this Legislature is, are those reserves within the province of Ontario? I think we all answer yes. If they are residents of the province of Ontario, then certainly we have some sort of responsibility. I am more and more of the mind that we should be negotiating with our First Nations, and we should be negotiating with the federal government to transfer many of the responsibilities that the federal government has now to the province, with adequate funding and a non-derogation clause that makes sure there is no negative effect on treaty rights, and a fiduciary responsibility of the federal government.

I say that for this simple reason: Can you imagine anywhere in Ontario, a non-aboriginal community, where there's been a boil-water advisory for eight years? Anybody know of one? Not one. If there's a boil-water advisory for a short period of time, there's a process within the Ministry of the Environment provincially, and the municipality, to work toward trying to fix the problem.

I know we've been challenged as of late because of the new water regs and some of our water plants, which are safe but need to be made safer—we're having some problems trying to fund those—but my point is that we as a province take our responsibility. We have the bureaucracy to back it up. We have the ability to make sure that the people who work in the water plants are tested, that the plants are certified, that they follow provincial regulations that are quite stringent so that people don't die when they drink their water. But because they happen to live in an aboriginal community—and in most cases, 99.9% are aboriginal residents—they're put in a position

where they're treated differently. They're treated as second-class citizens.

I'm really, really upset with our federal government at the way that they deal with aboriginal communities in this province and across this country. They do an awful job, and I really implore the government to take a look at the issue of trying to look at ways of negotiating with the federal government and aboriginal communities to take responsibility for things like water, education, and we're already working on health care—health care is being transferred over, by and large, to the province—because we are much better able to deal with those things, and the federal government's track record, quite frankly, is unbelievable.

Now, second issue: farming. I want to raise—because I've done this with my good friend Mrs. Van Bommel, and her office is looking into this—the situation in Opasatika when it comes to the mushroom farm. There's an organization, a business, that was created with some dollars from the federal government about five or six years ago. It was a mushroom farm that was built in Opasatika. Unfortunately, the mushroom farm went under. There were some issues around hydro. They had some hydro problems. As a result, they lost a couple of crops. They were not a very cash-rich operation, and at one point, they shut down.

There is a local parish priest, père Noël—Father Christmas, translated to English—who, out of his own money, because he came into the priesthood after he had been—I think he became a priest in his 30s or 40s. So the man was a contractor and has a little bit of money from his time before he went into the priesthood. He really, as everybody else, feels for his community and is trying to do what he can as an individual to give the community some hope, as far as employment. So he has taken all of his life savings, personal money, and he's basically bought the mushroom farm. He's paying out of his pocket all of the construction that needs to be done in order to put this mushroom farm in place so that the community has some form of employment.

Now, I don't have to convince you. Priests don't normally do this kind of thing. This is a pretty special individual. I'm not saying that other priests are not as caring, but this is a little bit of an odd situation. So here he is. He's putting in all of his money in order to be able to get the mushroom farm back up and running. Unfortunately, what happened was, the people who are working with him to put the project in place—and I've got to say, there's a lot of volunteerism going on in the community, where people are volunteering their time to reconstruct, fix and do what has to be done to put the farm back into operation—applied under the RED program for some dollars in order to buy the computers that are needed to run the farm so that they can do that efficiently.

Unfortunately, the application through the RED program was somewhat delayed. I'm not going to point fingers at the government, because these things are always a little bit of this and a little bit of that. The point

is, it took a little bit longer than it had to. They had their backs against the wall. They had to say, "We can't go any further, because if we, at this point, wait for the RED application, we cannot do any more development on the farm because the computers are the bottleneck." They had to get the computers up and running. So they went out and spent, I think, about \$50,000 or \$55,000 to buy the technology to install it in the mushroom plant so that they can get to the next step of getting this operation up and running.

As a result, they are basically disqualified from the RED program. I've asked Mrs. Van Bommel and her office to try to intervene with the ministry in order to say OK. Normally, we don't fund things after—I understand that; I've been around government long enough—but this is a pretty exceptional case, and I would ask that the government take a look at, through Mrs. Van Bommel's office, an opportunity to do something to assist them. It may have to be under another form. We may have to say, "Well, maybe not the computers," but that you've got something else. "Let's see if we can help you that way."

1050

I just want to stress that there are not a lot of mushroom farms in northern Ontario, so this is a really good opportunity for us in northern Ontario to venture into this type of business. It's a community business, as I see it. Even though it's owned by Father Christmas, le père Noël, it's still, in my view, very much a community project and something we should be trying to solve.

I want to thank Mrs. Van Bommel on the record for helping us on that file and I look forward to some sort of resolution to that particular issue.

The other thing I want to put on the record is the issue of trade with the United States. Listen, we're all on the same book when it comes to this one. We thought we had negotiated free trade and NAFTA so that we'd have access to the American market. In exchange for doing that, we lost certain things in Canada in terms of some of our sovereignty, I would argue. Here we have yet again another example, in the agricultural industry this time, where the federal American government is doing everything they can to block goods going into the United States from the Canadian or Ontario agricultural industry.

We have seen what has happened with BSE. Certainly the border should have been opened a long time ago, but state and federal legislators do everything they can to protect their own people, and as a result, everything from beef to lamb to sheep to deer etc. is blocked at the border so we can't get them in. I just want to urge the government, on the record, to do whatever is in its power to try to get a resolution to this particular issue, because it's hurting everybody, as you well know.

From northern Ontario, I raise the case of Cedar Meadows, where they grow deer. As you know, there is a market for deer that's pretty specialized, but a big part of the market has been taken away by virtue of the border being closed. I just urge the government to do what it can to work toward a speedy resolution.

Again, I point the finger at the federal government. I wonder what's going on over there sometimes, because this issue has been dragging on long enough. I don't understand why we haven't found a resolution as of this date.

I want to congratulate the member on her motion.

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** I'm pleased to join in this discussion. I'm going to try to refrain from using the term "sexy." It has been used a few times, and every time it happens, I see our young pages start blushing. I don't want to make that happen again, so we'll refrain from that, but I might have to use it once or twice.

I have to say that earlier I heard some remarks, and I take exception a little bit to what I think is really rigid dinosaur thinking: "The minister's got to look after it. We've got to legislate it and regulate it and throw money at it." Well, part of what we have to do in this initiative, which is Buy Ontario—this is a promotion. We're talking about promoting and marketing something here, and the way you do that is that you talk about it, you educate it. We're also talking about consumer power.

What we have going on right now—I kind of feel like the member from Trinity-Spadina; this is something he would talk about—is a one-hour commercial. We're doing a one-hour television commercial on Buy Ontario and all the reasons why we should be buying Ontario. And, yes, because it's a commercial, I have to say it's sexy. You always have to mention sex if you're doing a television commercial. So there you go: it is a sexy thing to go out and buy Ontario.

Let me tell you some of the reasons you should be buying Ontario. It is something that governments and consumers should be doing—not "should be"; that they have to do. This is a consumer project we're talking about here. This is where consumers have all the power: Get out there and buy Ontario food. When you do, first of all, you will get the freshest, best-tasting, most nutritious, safest food that you can get, period, bar none. That's number one. But you will also contribute to your local economy, to the provincial economy, by buying Ontario. We can talk a lot about buying Ontario in terms of cars, if they're manufactured here and all rest, but largely that can be an export market. But when you buy Ontario food, you are supporting something that we cannot, as a society, live without. We're talking about the sustainability of our society when you buy Ontario food. We have to have the ability to feed ourselves. We have to support those people who produce our food so that we can support ourselves and feed ourselves. That's absolutely basic. It comes down to something as simple as that. As a society, if we're going to be a success in any way, shape or form, we need to be able to feed ourselves.

You can add to that that the other things we need are clean air and clean water. Three basic things: We need clean air, we need clean water and we need to be able to feed ourselves. In the area of clean water, this government is bringing in the source water protection, and in the area of clean air, we are closing down coal-generating plants.



Now, in the area of feeding ourselves, what we're doing is promoting Buy Ontario, because this will be what we need to do. I like to go a little bit further than just Buy Ontario. I say celebrate Ontario in every way, shape and form. Celebrate Ontario food because it's the best-tasting. Celebrate Ontario music because it's the best in the world, in many cases: Celine Dion—no, she's from Quebec. Shania Twain, Alanis Morissette—there we go—and some of the best in the world. Or in art, literature, all these areas, celebrate Ontario.

In fact, in my riding of Stoney Creek I have the only Canadian-owned producer of whisky left in the world. I can't tell you if it's good whisky because I don't drink whisky, but I hear it's fabulous whisky. It's the only Canadian-owned whisky producer left, and that's a tremendous shame. It's Kittling Ridge. John Hall produces a great product called Forty Creek. Buy Ontario: Buy Forty Creek, if you happen to be a whisky drinker. If you're not, there is our wine. We have some of the best wines in the world. The industry was very brave a number of years ago and ripped out all sorts of their vineyards because they were challenged to make better wine. They put in better vines, and now we're producing some of the best wine in the world.

We've talked about the safety and nutrition.

I just want to leave you with one thought: When my uncle came home from the war, my grandmother said to him, "What would you like to eat?" He said, "I want a fresh Ontario beefsteak tomato and a glass of milk." It was the taste of home. It's the soil, it's the air, it's the water. It's the taste of home. It's the taste of Ontario. It's the best in the world.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** I want to compliment my colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Maria Van Bommel, for this particular initiative. She's been a strong supporter of the rural community.

You know, the interesting thing is that since we moved from 130 seats to 103 seats in the Ontario Legislature, the rural voice has diminished. I know there were those who thought, "Isn't this great? Let's get rid of politicians." There was a mentality that it was all evil. I'd like to remind some of my rural friends that what happened from that was that the rural voice was diminished in number, and that's most unfortunate.

We're lucky in Ontario that we have fresh food. The Foodland Ontario program promotes our fresh food. That's what people have when they visit, if I can be parochial again, the Niagara Peninsula. They have available to them all kinds of fresh fruit and vegetables. We have other products, animal products, in Ontario. We have a lot to be proud of here, and we have to promote those products in the best possible way and as often as possible. The fact is that they're fresh. The second is that they're of high quality. The third is that they're safe. It seems to me that all of us have to work with our retailers in this regard to promote these products as well. I think some of them want to be very co-operative about that.

I heard two members of the Conservative caucus say today that they want to spend more money promoting

Foodland Ontario, yet yesterday and the day before in the House, I heard John Tory, the leader of the Conservative Party, and Jim Flaherty, the finance critic, both condemning the government for spending too much money. They'll have to have a debate in their caucus about whether they want more money spent or less money spent. You can't have it both ways.

I compliment my colleague for this particular initiative, which I think all of us will support.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mrs. Van Bommel, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Van Bommel:** First of all, I want to take a moment just to thank all the members who spoke: the members for Oxford, Niagara Falls, Timmins-James Bay, Stoney Creek and St. Catharines.

One of the things that happened to me this week was that on Tuesday night, I got a phone call from my daughter. It was 7 o'clock at night and she said, "Mom, come quick." I knew what it was. It was my next grandchild, my eighth grandchild, and I went racing down there. I missed the birth of Anthony Michael Van Meurs by 15 minutes. It was wonderful just to be there. One of the nice things about it was that Anthony, or Tony, as we're starting to call him already, was born at a rural hospital. He was born at Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital. One of the things that happened at Strathroy hospital in its early years—and it happened at all rural hospitals—was that they had a farm and they supplied food for the patients from that farm.

I think that in a lot of ways we've gone back into that again. We're starting to recognize the important role that food plays in our day-to-day health. We are starting to talk more about high fibre and having vegetables and fruit in our diets, and we understand that we can keep ourselves healthy by eating good, safe food. One of the things, in setting up a framework, is that I want to stress, and I want people to be able to understand, that buying Ontario first, buying Ontario food, whether it is produce, meats, grains—all of those things help us to stay healthy, and at the same time we create a strong agricultural economy in doing that. I hope that everyone will support this, and I thank everyone.

1100

## HEALTHY LIVING

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should designate the first week in October of every year as Walk to School Week, as part of the international Walk to School program, to encourage physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle among our youth.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Kular, pursuant to standing order 96, you have up to 10 minutes.

**Mr. Kular:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this private member's resolution, motion number 45. It's my pleasure to rise in the House and ask today for the

support of my colleagues on this resolution, which, if passed, would designate the first week in October every year as Walk to School Week in Ontario. This week would be a part of the international Walk to School program, which gives children, parents, schoolteachers and community leaders an opportunity to be a part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking.

Walk to School Week was first initiated in Great Britain in 1994, and Canada joined the international program in 1998, with 16,000 students from 100 schools across five provinces participating. Of those 16,000, I'm proud to say that 14,500 of these students were from our own province of Ontario. By 2004, over 2,000 Canadian schools participated, and over 850 of those schools were in Ontario alone, promoting physical activity, safer streets and a cleaner environment.

The goal of International Walk to School Week is to make people think about the many positive benefits that can be gained from regular walking to and from school. The international school week is more than just getting together with children and walking to school one week a year. The event's greater goal is to bring about permanent change in communities and lifestyles throughout the world.

Walk to School Week in Ontario would encourage physical fitness through the easiest-to-do form of exercise, and safety by teaching children the skills to walk safely and to identify safe routes to school; increase awareness of the importance of physical exercise and its role in preventing future health and medical problems; and show concern for the environment and raise awareness of our role in protecting the environment.

It would reduce traffic congestion and would reduce pollution. It would create awareness of how walkable and safe a community is, and where improvements can be made. It would promote social interaction by allowing the people of Ontario to share valuable quality time with local community leaders, parents and children.

For many parents around the world, the car has become the main means of transporting children to and from school. Work and family commitments, convenience, safety concerns, and general changes in lifestyle are just some of the reasons that parents are using their cars for this activity. The proportion of trips to school made by car has increased considerably in the last several years, leading to a gradual decline in the number of children walking to and from school on a regular basis.

As a family physician turned politician, I have seen first-hand how physical inactivity and lack of exercise contributes to health and medical problems. This is particularly of great concern when it comes to our children. Children who are overweight as youngsters tend to be overweight as adults. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, levels of obesity among children aged seven to 13 have nearly tripled over the past 20 years. The increase that we are continuing to see in childhood obesity is alarming. It's crucial that we stop this trend. As we all know, health problems can result from obesity; for example, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart

disease, arthritis and other joint problems, to name just a few. This is costly not just in terms of health but also in terms of dollars.

These alarming trends need to be addressed. One important strategy is to help our young people be more physically active by walking, cycling or in-line skating to and from school, and not just during International Walk to School Week, but year-round.

Children are inactive for reasons ranging from watching too much television and spending too much time on computers to the lack of daily physical activity such as walking and cycling to school. The Canadian 2004 national survey on active transportation found that only 22% of children walk to school most of the time or always. Here in our province, the Active and Safe Routes to School organization determined that only 36% of children who live within a 30-minute walk of their school actually do walk to school, yet Ontario walkability studies found that nearly 75% of Ontario elementary children surveyed would prefer to walk or cycle to school rather than travel by motor vehicle. This is a remarkable finding. The study also found a significant gap between the number of students who are currently cycling to school and those who would prefer to cycle. Three and a half per cent of the Ontario students surveyed ride their bicycle to school regularly; however, a striking 26% would prefer this method of transportation.

Part of the International Walk to School Week is the walking school bus, an innovative tool where parents and neighbours supervise a group of students on their way to and from school. This approach reduces congestion and teaches traffic safety. The walking school bus provides a great social atmosphere for both adults and students. For example, if just nine families participate in a walking school bus, they can collectively prevent almost 1,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere.

I'm proud to say that a school in my town of Brampton, Morton Way Public School, was the first runner-up for the first-ever International Walk to School Award. This award recognizes the outstanding achievements made to encourage children to walk to and from school and create healthier, safer and caring communities. Every week for the past few years, Morton Way Public School has celebrated Walking Wednesdays, encouraging students to walk to school with their friends, families or caregivers. Parent volunteers lead walking school buses. This encourages family members to walk to school and helps develop a sense of community. On Wednesdays, between 88% and 98% of students reportedly walk to school.

#### 1110

I ask you to please seriously consider this resolution and I ask all members to vote in favour of it. This is a resolution that will help reduce childhood obesity, encourage community spirit, help protect the environment and reduce reliance on energy-consuming vehicles.

Healthy people make healthy communities. By making people healthy, we can create strong and caring



communities. I would again request all members of this Legislature to support my private member's resolution. I would say, let Walk to School Week be a part of the history of this province and help create healthy Ontarians and a healthier environment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to participate in this debate on the resolution brought forward by the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. How could anyone in the House not support this? Probably all of us remember the days when we did indeed walk to school. Speaker, I know that you were one of those who walked to school, uphill both ways, and what good exercise that was.

Certainly I, and I know all members of my caucus, will support this bill. Anything we can do to encourage physical fitness, especially among our young people—because that is where it all starts. As we survey this Legislature, we know that some of us should probably be walking to the Legislature every day, because it would be good for us. I won't point out any honourable members. I do note this, though: I look at our pages and they're all in great physical shape. So obviously they're doing their sports on a regular basis. They're either walking or running to school or running to the subway, doing whatever they need to do to be physically active and physically fit.

I'm sure the signal the member wants to send, by putting this into the form of a resolution and having it debated by the Legislature, is that it indicates his priority and how important he believes physical fitness is for young people and for our society in general. He must indeed consider it important, because it's not often—in fact, each member of the Legislature only has the opportunity to bring a matter before the House for debate about once a session. So to take one hour of debate in the House and invite all members of the Legislature to speak to this issue, it obviously is very important to the member, and we therefore participate gladly in this debate.

As a former Minister of Tourism and Recreation, I have a particular interest in physical fitness and amateur sports. I see the current Minister of Tourism and Recreation is here and listening to this debate intently. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the wisdom of this minister in bringing forward an issue that I had the opportunity to put on the table when I was minister. I refer to that as my open doors policy. I want to commend the ministry staff who worked with me on that issue, for the support that I had from them. I also want to thank them for not shredding those documents following the last election, and for the fact that this minister, the member from St. Catharines, in his wisdom, has chosen to bring this forward, if not in totality, certainly the essence and the spirit of it. That open-doors policy was that I felt that we should be viewing every school in every neighbourhood of this province as a recreation centre. Rather than have those doors closed after school and on weekends, those doors should be open. They

should be open to the community, and those doors should remain open, not only to our young people, but the facilities there, that are paid for by their parents—whether it's the gymnasiums that are there, whether it's the sports facilities in and around the school—should be available to the community.

There is no reason why our young people should be forced to congregate in malls or on street corners when we have these incredible facilities, paid for by taxpayers, paid for by the parents of those young people, who often say they have nowhere else to go. Those doors should be open, and the fees should either be non-existent or certainly subsidized by the provincial government to make it possible for everyone, regardless of their ability to pay, to have access to those recreational facilities.

Again, I want to give credit to many people across the province, because we did consultations with coaches, with individuals involved in recreation across the province. We did consultation with teachers who were involved in teaching physical activity, and with various organizations, from the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts to others, to talk about what it would take to ensure that these facilities were available for our young people. Again, thanks to the ministry staff who took this on as a very important project, who helped work out some of the details. Again, I want to acknowledge, and gladly so, the current Minister of Tourism and Recreation for making a subsequent announcement when he took over that portfolio. I know that what he's doing now is just the beginning, because it's the right thing to do. It's a place where we should be investing, because by making those facilities available, we're investing in our young people. As important as the academics, I believe, is the physical well-being of our youth. This is one effective way of doing it.

I also want to go on record as saying that I am an advocate of mandatory physical education in our school system. I remember well, when I attended elementary and secondary school, there was no question—in fact, you needed special permission not to participate in the physical education class. I want those days back in Ontario. I believe one of the best things we can do for our young people is to encourage them to be actively and physically engaged in sporting activities, to understand the importance of what it does to our own mental well-being when we're physically in shape. So whether that's the team sports aspect of the exercise, there's nothing like learning how important it is to be a member of a team, to be working as a team, and to have the competition, the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. You learn that when you're involved in organized sports. What better place to learn that than within the school setting with your school colleagues.

**1120**

With regard to the resolution that's before us today, this issue of ensuring that there is recognition, as the member wants us to do, of one particular week within the year—I believe he's referring to the first week of October that the member wants designated as Walk to School

Week. I certainly support that. I do believe it's important that somehow we as legislators do what we can to encourage that kind of activity.

I will leave the rest of the time for debate to my colleagues, who I know also want to comment. I thank the member for bringing this forward and look forward to this playing a role, although perhaps minor. I look forward to the government assuming its responsibilities to do much more in this area of encouraging physical activity and encouraging amateur sports.

We have a budget coming within the next few days. I'm hoping that the Minister of Tourism and Recreation has been able to convince his finance minister and his cabinet colleagues to designate a certain amount of financial resource so that he can in fact further this important policy of encouraging our young people to be engaged in sports, to ensure that the resources and the supports are there, whether that be coaches or teachers, with regard to physical activity within the school system, whenever it may be. I wish the minister well in achieving that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** I want to point out that I'm a product of a policy like this, as you well see. On the positive side, I support the member opposite for bringing forward this motion. As we say in the language that most people understand, this is a bit of a no-brainer. The motion basically says two things. The first part of the motion talks about designating the first week in October as Walk to School Week. Well, maybe we should have a Walk to Queen's Park Week. That would probably be good for many of us who are here today. Because you know that you have to follow my example and my physical physique, as good as it is. I want people to come to my level. I won't stand sideways as I say that.

The other thing that the particular motion talks about is doing something in order to encourage physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle amongst our youth. I would say that a lot of that is being done already. As you well know, health units and school boards across this province, along with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, are doing a pretty phenomenal job, are doing a pretty good job of educating the public, both young and old, about the need to live healthier lifestyles, with everything from what we eat to physical exercise. We all recognize, at the end of the day, that a healthier lifestyle, as far as physical exercise and a better diet, will give a better lifestyle and will hopefully lead to less disease and a longer life.

There's an interesting conundrum in that, because one of the things that happens is—just one moment. I was eating a peppermint. You should never do that before you get up. I just saved myself on this one. I would just say one of the ironies of all of this is that we go out and promote these types of activities in order to make people healthier and to save money on the health care side, which clearly we do. But do we? I guess that's the point I'm raising. I'm not arguing against the member's motion, but what we end up having is that, as people live longer, the diseases get much more complicated and

much more expensive to deal with. I know the good doctor understands what I'm talking about because it's one of the discussions I have on a fairly regular basis with a number of friends of mine within the medical community, as we talk about how to contain the cost of health care—with hospital administrators, nurse practitioners, doctors and others. How do we contain the cost of health care as it escalates?

There are those in our society who would argue that we need to move to a more private system, as they've done in the provinces of Quebec and Alberta. There are even those on the farther right who would say that we have to go to a system where you can completely opt out. If you're on the list for knee surgery, you should have the ability to say, "To heck with the public system. I'm jumping the queue and I'm going to pay extra money and go get my knee surgery done at a faster pace." I'd just say that people should be careful what they ask for, because they might just get it. At the end of the day, if we allow that type of slip to happen to the private system, eventually our public system will be so underfunded, because there will be a larger reliance on the private system, that the governments of the day will have less pressure to make sure that our public system is properly funded and well organized, to the point that the public system will deteriorate. Over a period of time, you will have what you have in the United States, where there is a public system—and most people should understand this. We talk about private health care in the United States. Yes, the health care system in the United States by and large is much more private, but there is a public system run at the state and local levels, where you have state or county hospitals that are funded by the states themselves and through some funding from the federal government. But the point is, you'd better not go in there with something really serious because the reality is, there's very little coverage in the state programs as compared to what there is here in Canada. People can basically go bankrupt with one illness.

I will also point out that the cost of health care in the United States under the private system is much more expensive. You would know the name Leo Gerard, Speaker. Most people would know that I was at an event last night. It was the annual Cesar Chavez awards, given every year in his honour to workers across this province with regard to their activities within the labour movement and human rights overall. Leo was one of the recipients of the award. He talked about a very interesting experience that he is living today. He is a Canadian from Sudbury who understands very well the Canadian experience of public health care, who is living in the United States as the international president of the United Steelworkers of America—or the United Steelworkers, as they're called under their new title. Last night, he talked about the whole difference of our health care systems vis-à-vis the United States. One of the things he pointed out that I think some people may or may not be aware of is that if you're working for an employer, most employers, if they're unionized, negotiate health care programs in



order to cover their employees. The cost of those health care programs is somewhere around \$8 per hour. So when you're negotiating with an employer in the United States and you're trying for the first time to get a health care program, good luck. Imagine you're working for \$10 an hour and your local union goes in and requests a health care plan partly paid by the employer and the employees for the insurance company, and it's eight bucks an hour to get a basic plan. It's extremely expensive. Why? Because, quite frankly, they're much more inefficient than our public Canadian system. All the studies have shown that the Canadian system is a much less expensive system to run health care. Why? Because it's done in the public sector and we have some efficiencies of scale when it comes to running everything under one particular service provider, that being the province of Ontario.

Do we have problems in our health care system? Certainly. But I do want to say this: You get a heart attack in the province of Ontario, you get seriously ill and wheeled into emergency and you have a serious illness, they'll take care of you, and you don't have to check your credit card at the door. Unfortunately, I had a bout of flesh-eating disease back a couple of months ago. That's why I wasn't here for a little bit. I went into the hospital—and it was serious enough that, bam, you're into the hospital. They took care of me. They did what had to be done. They sent me home. Home care came to my house and gave me IVs for about seven days to clear the infection, and eventually it went away.

My point is, the public health care system responds very well. There's this fallacy out there that our system is in total crisis. Yes, there are problems, but the system is not in total crisis. I really get upset when I hear people talk about the crisis in health care, because the only crisis that we have in health care is the ability for us to fund it to a certain degree, and we need to be able to respond to that. There are a number of things that we can do to make sure that health care expenditures are affordable and that we get the best bang for our dollar when we do invest.

1130

I was elected here in 1990, some 16 years ago. The overall total budget back then, if I remember correctly, was around \$40 billion-odd a year. That was the Ontario budget, of which about half was health care, roughly some \$20-odd billion. Now our provincial budget is at \$80 billion; it's pretty well doubled in the time that I've been here. Of course, proportionately, the health care expenditure has gone up as well; it's about half of our budget, which is just under \$40 billion total. So there is a challenge for provinces like ours to be able to afford the dollars necessary to keep up with a good health care system.

I come back to the motion that my good friend and colleague brought into the Legislature today. He knows well, as a doctor, that people are living longer. When they live longer, the diseases that we treat in our hospital wards, emergency rooms, health clinics and doctors' offices are far more complex and expensive to deal with

than in the older days when people dropped dead of heart attacks at age 55. That's not very expensive. My grandfather worked in the bush all his life and died of an aneurysm when he was 52 years old, in large part because of his lifestyle and where he worked. That didn't cost health care very much. He dropped dead. They put him in an ambulance, brought him to emergency and said, "Too bad, so sad, you're gone," and the family grieved. That was not a very expensive system.

Nowadays, people live far longer. How many people in our communities that we know personally today are in their 90s? Certainly, there are many people in their 80s who are living very active lives. Yes, hip replacements, knee surgeries, cardiovascular bypass surgery, cataracts—there are all kinds of diseases that we're able to treat now quite successfully, allowing people to live a lot longer. Of course our health care expenditures have gone up, because we have been successful with the very point that the member brings into the House today, which is that we are living a much healthier lifestyle than we did years ago. Our diet is better; our exercise is better.

I look at communities like Smooth Rock Falls, Hearst, Kapuskasing or Timmins, but Smooth Rock Falls just as an example. There is a very large and healthy seniors population in that community, and luckily for them, when they retired, there were good pensions out of the old Abitibi plant, now Tembec. They're very active. There's a golf course there. Just go there any time. I hate golf, by the way. I want to admit that it's the one game I am totally frustrated by. I couldn't hit a ball straight if my life depended on it, but I get dragged out by my friends every now and then, and they get to laugh at me. But that's another story.

There is a very active senior population on the golf course in Smooth Rock Falls. I would guess almost a majority of the players are seniors, because they've got time on their hands and disposable income, and they're very physically active. There's a very active curling club; they're out curling all the time.

Yes, people are living healthier lifestyles and, as a result, they're living a lot longer. The challenge for us is, how do we fund this success? That's really where we're at. How do we fund the success that we've had in educating people to live healthier lifestyles, eat better and to generally live longer? How do we fund our success? That's the issue. Our health units, our public education and our schools have been very successful in getting people to do that. Consequently, people are living longer, and now we need to figure out how to fund it.

I think there are a couple of things we can do, and I want to come to that. For example, one of the things that drives me crazy in our health care system is this: I walked into the office of my flight surgeon last Friday. I went for the bi-annual physical for my pilot's licence. If my doctor had sent me out for tests: blood work or whatever it is they wanted for the test; they didn't in this particular case, but it's happened before—there is absolutely no way for the health care system to know I haven't done that same test with another doctor the day before.

I have had that happen: I've gone to see my family doctor in Timmins, Dr. Steve Cohen, because of an issue. I come down to Toronto and I'm still not feeling well, so I drop into the health clinic, Centre de santé communautaire on College Street, and they send me off to do the same test. I say, "Why don't you just call the lab in Timmins or my doctor's office, and you can get the results? I just had it done." "No, we've got to do it again."

It seems to me that we should be able to digitize this information somehow and share the information across all health care providers, so that if a doctor says, "I wouldn't mind seeing what your PSA count is"—or your blood count or your white cell count, whatever it is—and there has been a test done within a reasonable amount of time, he or she, as a nurse practitioner or doctor or whatever, could look up your file electronically and say, "There was the same test that I'm trying to prescribe to you now done but a week ago. Maybe I could rely on that as the indication of where I go next in my treatment of whatever disease you've come in to see me about."

So one of the things I think we need to do—it would be a fairly significant investment up front—is figure out how we can share medical information, when it comes to tests, across all of the various people and health care providers, so that we don't have a duplication of testing. It's a huge cost, as we well know.

I think one of the other things that we should do, and we've started down this road—the NDP, the Conservatives—I give them some credit—and the Liberals are continuing in that way—is look at how we have a multidisciplinary approach to health care. We don't always have to go to the doctor's office. It's not always a doctor who's got to treat you. There are nurses out there. There are nurse practitioners and other people in the health care field who are just as qualified.

You know, a nurse today entering the system goes to school for—what?—five years now. The BScN program is five years? My daughter is a BScN nurse. She originally did three years of college and two years of university. Now she's doing her nurse practitioner's degree. My point is, she is very well qualified, after five years of school, to treat or deal with somebody when it comes to some of the health ailments they may have as they walk into a health clinic, a doctor's office or whatever. So I think a more multidisciplinary approach to health care is where we've got to go. We've got to figure out better ways of being able to get doctors' offices in on this.

I was just at my flight surgeon Larry Mallo's office the other day, and this is where they're going. They're one of these group health care teams or networks or whatever.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** Community care access centre.

**Mr. Bisson:** No, no, not a CCAC. They're one of those health teams or networks, depending on when they were created.

The point is, that's where they're going, but they're having a hard time trying to attract a nurse practitioner. He was just telling me the other day that they've got

one—they've got room for two—but they can't recruit the nurse practitioners because there are not enough of them being put out of our colleges in order to qualify them to work in northern Ontario. So I'm working with Northern College right now, with president Hill, to look at whether we can partner with Laurentian University in order to offer a post-BScN program part-time for nurses in our area so that they can qualify as nurse practitioners.

I think one of the ways that we can save money is to invest upfront and say, let's look at ways of dispensing health care by way of not just doing it with doctors, and allowing doctors to do the more complex things.

It also deals with the shortage issue. One of the reasons we have a doctor shortage is that it's a very doctor-driven system. We need to find ways to make sure that doctors who are practising deal with the more complex cases and reduce some of the burden on them. That burden can be transferred over to other health care practitioners to deal with.

So I support the member's motion. I just want to say again, I'm a good physical—how would I say?—example of that particular policy by which you preach. Hopefully, I'll live to be 90 years old, too.

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I'm happy today to have the opportunity to speak in support of the resolution that was brought forward by my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

My colleague alluded to the health aspects of Walk to School Week and his attempts to promote this resolution. I'd just like to reiterate the importance of encouraging a healthy lifestyle for our young people. Walking is an important activity for our children and can counter the effects of obesity and inactivity that are prevalent among many young people in Ontario.

Brampton has the distinction of being one of the safest cities in Canada. This gives parents the peace of mind that their children are able to walk to school on a route that will be safe. This is an important additional benefit of living in Brampton.

Every morning, when possible, I make an effort to walk my dog, Bailey, before I come to Queen's Park. Bailey is a golden retriever, and our walks give me the opportunity to clear my mind and survey my domain. Bailey and I have seen many wonderful creatures. On our walk the other day, we saw a rabbit. We have seen a coyote. We walked the other way when we saw the coyote. We've seen deer. We've seen foxes. We've seen beavers, egrets, snakes and gophers, and we did see a large turtle one time that was about as big as a soup plate—really big.

In fact, walking to school is something I believe most people, young people particularly, enjoy. For example, when Dr. Kular spoke about Morton Way Public School, they are a shining example, and one of the students made this comment about International Walk to School Day: "Everyone in our school tries to walk for a healthy body and safer streets. I like walking to school with my friends because we can talk. Walking is way better than riding in a car because walking is more fun than getting a ride."



That was a student at Morton Way Public School in Brampton, Ontario.

Brampton has worked really hard to create some of the most beautiful and abundant park systems in any city in Canada and to protect our natural environment. Brampton offers an enviable community setting and enhanced lifestyle that is attracting thousands of new families every year.

1140

In fact, Brampton has many trails throughout the city. The three main ones are the Chinguacousy Trail, the Professor's Lake Trail and—the longest one—Etobicoke Creek Trail, which I walk most mornings. All three run north and south. The trail runs from the southern end of Kennedy Road near Highway 407 to Mayfield Road in the north.

Unfortunately, even though most people have lived or grown up in the city of Brampton, many have not explored the full length of the trails. They haven't discovered the flora and fauna that are right beside some of our major thoroughfares. In fact, one that I walk quite regularly has some of our wild trilliums, both the white ones that people traditionally know and the very dark ones that are almost black or purple in colour.

The Etobicoke Creek Trail begins just north of Highway 407 on the west side of Kennedy Road across from the north tip of our sports park. The entrance is at the north edge of Brampton golf course, just north of the Etobicoke Creek bridge, and runs through Loafer's Lake.

Towns in Ontario are often named after their first postmaster or are named after the city of the same name where the founder originated. Brampton was named by John Elliott of Brampton, England, but the area was also known as Buffy's Corners after Mr. Buffy's tavern opened on Queen and Main in 1822. In days gone by, Brampton had many flower nurseries and in particular was known for raising beautiful orchids and roses. Even today, should you visit or walk along the trails and paths in Brampton, you'll notice that the city remains "The Flower City" by the many beautiful park displays that we've been honoured for quite recently in Communities in Bloom.

The healthy and safe lifestyle that this resolution is trying to promote is exemplified by a well-known Bramptonian named Leo O'Brien. Leo was the winner of the Brampton Community Safety Hero of the Year Award in 2004. Leo can be seen several times a week on his unicycle walking his dogs Purdy and Tippy or with dogs from the local animal shelter. On these walks Leo carries a bag to collect broken glass. He has been doing this for more than five years. His efforts have saved countless dogs from serious injuries and make the trails in Brampton safer places for young people to walk. Walkers Against Glass is made up of an army of volunteers who are dedicated to making Brampton a safe place to walk.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this resolution. I am in full support of the promotion of International Walk to School Week, the first week of October, and I would be happy to support this resolution.

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brook):** I'm pleased to rise today on the motion brought forward by the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should designate the first week in October of every year as Walk to School Week, as part of the International Walk to School program, to encourage physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle among our youth."

I know that the member's intent is good; it's just sometimes a little difficult with our rural communities, and it seems to have more of an urban focus, which we see a lot from this government—a more urban focus without consideration for a lot of the rural areas.

There's widespread support. We all support more exercise among our young people and more of a healthy lifestyle, and we need to be better at that.

Just to take a few moments to share some of the statistics from one of the school boards in my riding, Trillium Lakelands District School Board: There are 41 elementary schools, seven secondary schools and six adult education centres that serve the needs of approximately 20,000 students. Eighty-eight per cent of those students in that school board travel to school by bus. I know it's not uncommon in some of the GTA areas for buses to pick up students, but students in my board walk to bus stops to be picked up, and on some days it's quite treacherous. I know that in the early mornings, when it's still dark, there is the threat of bears coming out and bothering students, and parents are rightfully concerned.

The Trillium Lakelands District School Board requires students to walk up to 1.6 kilometres if they are in junior kindergarten to grade 8. If they're in grades 7 or 8, they can walk up to 2.4 kilometres to catch their bus. If they're in high school, they can walk up to 3.2 kilometres, which is quite a bit of exercise. There are some children who have to walk that distance, and safety is certainly a concern.

I think we need to emphasize that this has very much an urban focus and needs to be more focused on rural ridings and the walking that the children in my area have to do every day.

I want to leave some time for the member from Waterloo–Wellington to speak. I just want to say that the theory is correct; just take into focus that rural areas have different needs and demands than the urban.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre):** I am pleased to be able to stand in support of Dr. Kular's motion. I would like to restate what the Canadian Institute for Health stated: that obesity among our children has increased. It has actually tripled in the last 20 years, between ages of seven and 11, and 36% of our children between the ages of two and 11 are overweight; 10% are actually considered obese. When you take those facts into consideration, regardless of whether it's urban or rural, it's a staggering statistic that we need to deal with.

It's interesting—in today's Globe and Mail, André Picard has an excellent article. In essence he said that 20 years ago, politicians didn't really go out of their way to triple the number of obese children or overweight chil-

dren, but in fact our policies, regulations and our pieces of legislation have done that: When you look at the school curriculum, it doesn't have physical activity in it any more, except as an elective that you can take for one course in the secondary level—and I know we're changing that; and we do not have an ability to teach the children around health initiatives. There are just so many reasons why it's such good thing to do, but there's an additional reason that I think sometimes people forget: Not only does walking allow some socialization for the children, but it also makes them very cognizant of their environment. The fact is that when you take a car off the road, you take emissions that would be going into the air out of the air.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** The One-Tonne Challenge.

**Mrs. Cansfield:** That's right, it's the One-Tonne Challenge. The fact is that when we drive our cars, there are SO<sub>x</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Interestingly enough, we have Drive Clean processes for our cars, but we don't seem to have any Drive Clean processes for our children. We pick them up and take them to the school; they don't have a physical activity where they spend five or six hours every day; and then we pick them up from school and take them home or we take them to a course. Children need more than that. They need to understand their bodies and appreciate that they have to care for those bodies. They also need to know and understand that they have to care for that environment in which their body lives. Their body requires clean air. I can remember, as a trustee, going to schools where the parents were so lined up with cars that they were double- and triple-parked. We have policies where we bus our children, knowingly, from their school to their community, yet they could still walk. We don't even encourage them to walk to the local school to get picked up by bus. We permit the other to occur. What are we teaching our children if we don't teach them to care about the air?

Part of the way we can do that is through the walking tour and the walking bus. Actually, it was initiated by Environment Canada some years ago as well, when they were looking at roles around climate change. They were trying to figure out what they could do to enable—because it's through the children that ultimately we're going to make this world a better place. We know that if we educate the children at a very early age and they continue with their habits, they take them into adulthood, which makes that statistic around obesity even more frightening, if you consider the health implications and ramifications of obesity in children, and as they move forward as adults, on our health care system.

So really what Dr. Kular is talking about is prevention—prevention of more emissions in the air, which in turn helps us in terms of our environment and a sustainable economy, a sustainable environment, a sustainable society. On the other hand, it helps our health care system, because we won't be overloaded with the effects of obesity in children, and in particular with diabetes, which is horrific disease.

So what Dr. Kular is doing really is, as my kids would say, a no-brainer. This is what we should be doing, but what we must do as legislators is look at those practices, policies and procedure that inhibit this from happening. Why are we encouraging our children to be bused when they can walk? Why are we not looking at those rural situations to encourage greater participation in the outdoors, in physical activity? I think if you really want to do something, you can do it. If you really want to put up the barriers, you'll do that as well.

1150

I believes, as this gentleman said at the end, "We have a fiscal and moral imperative to give them a fighting chance to grow up healthy." I don't think you could say it any better than that. I believe that that's our responsibility here in the Legislature. I don't think kids want to be fat. Do you? Absolutely not, yet they have no voice in all the things that we do to enable that to happen. So I'm pleased to support Dr. Kular's motion.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I am very pleased to have a chance to speak briefly this morning to the motion that has been brought forward by the member opposite: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should designate the first week in October of every year as Walk to School Week, as part of the International Walk to School program, to encourage physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle among our youth."

Over the years, I've noticed that the issues that are brought forward on Thursday mornings in private members' time tend to fall into three categories. One category would be motherhood issues that would enjoy the support of the full House, most likely, and I would expect that this motion will in fact receive the support of most of the members, if not unanimous support. Another category are issues that need to be raised but are controversial, and the member who is bringing it forward is trying to make a point. I would categorize my Bill 52, the act to support double-hatter firefighters, as one of those issues. The third category tends to be government backbenchers bringing forward initiatives that the government is not prepared to introduce but wants to have raised somehow, and they give the idea to a private member.

Again, I think that Dr. Kular has brought forward this issue in a sincere way to try and draw attention to the need to ensure that children receive the exercise they need. I expect he will receive the support of the House for this particular motion. Certainly, I'm going to support it. If indeed it comes to a recorded vote, he can count on my support.

**Mr. Ramal:** I am honoured and privileged to stand up this morning to speak in support of the private member's resolution brought by Dr. Kular, the MPP from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, which seeks to "designate the first week in October of every year as Walk to School Week, as part of the International Walk to School program, to encourage physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle among our youth."



I think it's a very important resolution. I've heard that all the speakers from both sides of the House are going to support it, because who's not going to support such an initiative to protect our youth and to create awareness among our youth and our parents about walking to eliminate a lot of problems?

The first important problem is obesity. When I was checking the e-mail about obesity around the world, I read that almost 22 million kids suffer from obesity. I think that initiative will help them to reduce their weight and create some kind of health, instead of diseases like cardiac problems, diabetes and so many different things we create from being overweight. I think Dr. Kular, as a doctor, knows the value of youth being healthy in order to create a healthy future for our province, for our country, for our world. As you know, those youth are our future, so protecting youth means protecting the future.

I was listening to the member from Timmins—James Bay when he was talking about our health care, which costs us a lot of money. This initiative will save us a lot of money if we encourage it and we help our youth and their parents, help our youth to walk and exercise.

I had the privilege yesterday to meet a doctor who came from France. Everybody thought that France had a great health care system. I was amazed when he was telling me about their health system in comparison with what we have in Ontario. We have a great system. We have great health coverage. We should protect it by such initiatives as Walk to School Week, and also, since we have with us today the Minister of Tourism, a program such as Active 2010 to create some kind of activities among our adults across the province.

Today, since we're speaking about the resolution brought by Dr. Kular, I think it is very important to send a great message to all people across the province about the importance of walking to school. It's not just about health but also about reducing the emissions created by cars, by buses, when we bus students to school, and also eliminating traffic, which all of us suffer every day when we travel from point one to point two. Even when I come from my apartment to this place, I always face a lot of traffic in the morning. That week will create such a good environment and all of us will notice. We will also protect our environment. We will eliminate many injuries among our youth, among our students. I think it's a very good initiative. Hopefully, by our speaking about it today—all the members of the House—I think we send a great message to all the people across the province to acknowledge it, and not just know about it, but use it as a tool in order to create a good, healthy environment, in order to create such an initiative to carry on for the future, and maybe also create a habit, especially in good weather like today, that from now on until the schools end, we create a habit of walking every day to school.

Also, I listened to many speakers who spoke before me. I want to try to walk every day to Queen's Park, and not just ask the students to walk. I think all of us should use it—not just for the students—for ourselves, because

it's very important to walk, to exercise, to maintain our health. By maintaining our health, we're preventing many diseases and also protecting our health care.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak. I think it's a very good resolution. I'm honoured and pleased to support this resolution.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr. Kular, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Kular:** I would like to encourage each one of the members to visit the official Web site of the International Walk to School program—their Web site is [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org)—and consider participating in Walk to School Week in your riding.

In Ontario, Go for Green is one of the organizing groups. To find out more about how schools in your riding can participate in Walk to School Week, go to their Web site, which is: [www.goforgreen.ca](http://www.goforgreen.ca). The Web site for Active and Safe Routes to School, a Go for Green initiative, also has information on Walk to School Week activities. Their Web site is: [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca) for information and resources.

I also want to thank all the members who are supporting my resolution: the member from Etobicoke Centre, the member from Brampton Centre, the member from London—Fanshawe, the member from Oak Ridges, the member from Timmins—James Bay, the member from Haliburton—Victoria—Brock and the member from Waterloo—Wellington.

I would say Walk to School Week is about sharing quality time with parents and children, creating healthier, safer and caring communities. It's about promoting physical activity. It's about reducing traffic congestion and pollution. I would ask all the members to fully support it, bring it into practice and start walking. I would say that those who talk the talk should walk the walk.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time allowed for private members' public business has expired.

## ONTARIO PRODUCE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We will first deal with ballot item number 65. Mrs. Van Bommel has moved private member's resolution number 43.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## HEALTHY LIVING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** We shall now deal with ballot item number 66. Mr. Kular has moved private member's resolution number 45.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the chair. The House resumes at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1159 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### AGNES JAMIESON GALLERY

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** I'm pleased to rise today to share with members of the Legislature about an event I attended this past weekend.

The Agnes Jamieson Gallery in Minden was celebrating their official opening after their recent expansion. The gallery was named after Agnes Jamieson, a local doctor who was also an accomplished artist. She had a dream of establishing a gallery in Minden and, along with a number of other dedicated individuals, worked to establish the present Agnes Jamieson Gallery at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre.

The gallery received funding for this expansion from the previous provincial government through the Super-Build program. They also received federal and municipal funding, and the Minden Hills Cultural Centre Foundation worked to raise additional funds.

I want to thank the gallery curator, Laurie Carmount, whose tenacity kept the project moving forward.

When Frank Welch, a local undertaker, willed André Lapine oils and watercolours to his community in 1973, he did so on the condition that they be cared for and displayed.

They needed this expansion and renovation in order to properly house the André Lapine permanent collection at the gallery and to allow the gallery to showcase travelling exhibitions. The Lapine collection draws tourists to the gallery and to the Minden area. André Lapine was a renowned Canadian artist who painted predominantly farm landscapes and wilderness areas and is widely regarded as Canada's finest painter of horses.

Haliburton is fast becoming an artists' community and is thought of by many people as the Banff of the east. Being able to showcase other artists as well will help further this transformation. I encourage everyone to visit Minden and the Agnes Jamieson Gallery this summer.

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** With the budget close at hand, I remind the McGuinty Liberals that Ontario colleges are ranked 10th of the 10 provinces in per student revenue. At a time when we need skilled trades and technology graduates to support our industries, our health care and social services system, and the hospitality and tourism sectors, Ontario colleges are at a breaking point. The Rae review said colleges need an additional \$400 million by 2007-08. How much money will the Liberal government actually commit in this budget to narrow that gap?

At the beginning of March, the president of Cambrian College in Sudbury wrote to me, outlining the situation facing the college. She said, "We are still not able to afford to hire full-time faculty and many of our programs are running with one full-time faculty member and a

squadron of part-time folks to serve up to 200 students.... We can't afford a librarian and our technicians do not have the expertise to manage and renew our collection. Academic equipment continues to fall behind industry standards. We continue to only do the minimum when it comes to maintenance. Annually, our costs increase between \$2 million and \$3 million just due to salary and benefit increases. As Cambrian plans its 2005-06 budget, assuming we will have the same amount as 2004-05, excluding the one-time funding, the college faces a \$4-million shortfall. This means potential program closures, hiring freezes, and greater impact on services to students."

It's a disgrace for Ontario to be dead last in Canada when it comes to per student revenue to the colleges. We need a significant investment in our colleges, and our universities, in this budget. How much will the government deliver?

### COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington):** My riding of Guelph–Wellington has an unusually large number of Ontario disability support clients with mental health issues.

According to a 2001 census, 2,700 residents of Guelph and South Wellington required mental health support, and approximately 670 of these individuals required intensive management to cope. Providing appropriate community support to prevent psychiatric crises is a major challenge for Guelph agencies. For example, the Guelph Police Service spent \$57,000 from January to October last year, providing security for psychiatric patients at the local emergency room.

My constituency office has worked with the family of a man who suffers from schizophrenia to identify the cost of caring for him in psychiatric hospitals and jails. It appears the cost to the province for institutional intervention for this one individual approaches \$1 million.

The McGuinty government has provided \$950,000 to support community mental health services in Guelph–Wellington and an additional \$1.2 million to help people with mental illness stay out of jail. This support is very welcome, but Guelph still needs an assertive community treatment team. An ACT team increases the stabilization rate of individuals suffering from mental illness and reduces the requirement for institutionalization. I agree with my constituents. Guelph needs an ACT team, and it needs it now.

### DAVID WELDON

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding public servant. C. David Weldon, the chief administrative officer for the town of Richmond Hill, is retiring after 30 years of distinguished service.



The town of Richmond Hill was indeed fortunate when, in 1975, Dave Weldon ventured south from his previous post in municipal government in North Bay and Kenora to join the staff of the town of Richmond Hill. In 1982, Dave assumed responsibility as the town's very first chief administrative officer.

In the last 30 years, Dave has been instrumental in overseeing Richmond Hill's unparalleled growth. He has played an integral role in directing the town and its residents, both fiscally and physically, through uncharted municipal development and change. He has overseen the building of four arenas, three libraries, nine major recreation centres and four fire stations. Dave has influenced the town's direction in policy, setting its course in preserving green space for recreation, sport and the integrity of its heritage. Throughout his tenure, he has insisted upon fiscal responsibility and, to his credit, taxes were not raised at the town of Richmond Hill for 10 years.

Dave Weldon has not only worked for the town, he has consistently been an integral part of the community as a volunteer. He serves on the board of York Central Hospital and the board of the Richmond Hill community credit union. He has chaired his parish council, the St. Mary Immaculate school council and the town's Canada Day committee.

To Dave and his wife, Carol, and their children, Shawn, Lisa and Meaghan, we thank you for your unselfish service in the public interest and we wish you all of life's blessings in the years ahead.

#### MIDWIFERY

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the progress the McGuinty government has made toward increasing access to birthing services for women. Throughout the province we have invested \$37 million for midwifery services in 2004-05. This amounts to \$7 million more than the previous year. We have the opportunity to strengthen a noble profession that has provided assistance to families in time of great need for generations. The additional \$7 million will support 55 new midwives to provide services to 1,200 more Ontario women in community clinics, community-based agencies, hospitals and, more importantly, in the home. In the GTA, we are providing \$1.7 million at York Community Services and another \$237,000 at Markham Stouffville Hospital. This investment will give women both better access and more options for birthing services.

There are many advantages to greater investment in the profession of midwifery. A ministry study of women under the care of midwives and family physicians indicated three things: Women under the care of midwives had fewer C-sections and forceps deliveries and higher rates of breastfeeding than those under the care of physicians; consumer satisfaction for midwives is extremely high, at 98.7%; and about 25% of midwifery clients give birth at home, with no hospital stay and no additional cost to the health care system.

To repeat the words of our minister, "This government has made the largest one-year expansion of midwifery services ever in Ontario so that more women and new-borns can benefit from their services." We are making sure new midwives are supported in practice in communities where they are needed.

#### FERGUS BRASS BAND

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I rise today to congratulate the members and friends of the Fergus Brass Band on their 150th anniversary and for entertaining people in Wellington county and around Ontario since 1855.

I also want to thank Pat Mestern for the story that she wrote recently in the Fergus-Elora News Express about the Fergus Brass Band. Pat shares an extraordinary interest in our heritage in Centre Wellington through her story about the people in the band, supporters of the band, its relationship with our community and dedicated perseverance over 150 years of performances.

1340

The Fergus brass band is without a doubt one of the oldest continuous public performance bands in the province. The band began as a fife and drum corps to celebrate patriotic occasions. In the years between 1861 and 1920, they practised in the fire hall and then in the drill shed/town hall, and after 1955 they were headquartered at the bowling green club house. Their newly renovated building on Blair Street suits their needs very well today.

The band received plenty of support from its community and from its local government, and it has always given back. Main street businesses pitched in to construct a bandstand in Webster Park in 1919, right after World War I, and during the summer months in those days, hundreds and hundreds of people came to Fergus to attend the weekly free concerts.

The band continues to boost our spirits and culture in Centre Wellington. In my 15 years as an MPP, and lately as a resident of Fergus, I have attended many events where they have been front and centre, if not the main attraction, often supporting fundraising to meet our needs in our community. I agree with Pat Mestern, who says, "Fergusites should be proud of the band's accomplishments and lend them the support necessary to continue the tradition for another century."

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** I rise today to recognize Education Week 2005 and also to encourage and persuade the more than 30 schools in Etobicoke-Lakeshore to Read to Succeed. As a government we are celebrating 18 months of progress in Ontario's publicly funded education system. Our efforts for education include supporting improved student achievement, new respect for teachers and education

workers and more peace and stability in Ontario's schools.

Etobicoke–Lakeshore understands the importance of education in our children's lives. There are so many residents who are consistently active on this front, and it has been a pleasure to be involved with them. Last week, I visited Islington Junior and Middle School, and tomorrow I will be at George R. Gault Junior School as part of MPP back-to-school week. Getting back into the classroom is helpful in learning from students, teachers and parents in my community.

I also wanted to say thank you to the teachers in my riding who last month took part in an advisory to discuss local initiatives to benefit education and a future education forum in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. But it is just as crucial that parents are part of the equation, and I'm happy to say that in my community they are. I recently had the opportunity to speak with the parent council of Our Lady of Peace as well as visiting John English's open house. In a few weeks, I will be speaking at Norseman Junior and Middle School in an effort to engage, listen and communicate with parents' councils who are participating in this forum from all across my community.

This week we celebrate education in Ontario, in all of its forms and with all the people who make it work. Etobicoke–Lakeshore knows its significance and worth to our most valuable asset: our children and young people in our province.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** Education Week is a great opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of educators and students in our local schools. Yesterday I went back to school in Orléans. In fact, I had the opportunity to meet with students at five schools in my riding, and what a great experience it was.

I started my day with a visit to Cairine Wilson Secondary School. They told me about their participation in the Nelson Mandela children's fund and their partnership with a rural school in South Africa. I then attended a career fair at St. Matthew Catholic high school. Grades 11 and 12 students made displays of their co-op work experiences to inspire younger students to take advantage of the experience co-op offers in preparing kids of a great future. At Convent Glen Catholic School, I discussed provincial governance with a grade 5 class, and the questions were not always easy. I next had the privilege of attending an assembly celebrating the 35th anniversary of Queenswood Public School. I was honoured to present the school with an official scroll from our Minister of Education to mark the special occasion.

My final stop was truly inspirational. At Orléans Woods Elementary School, I met with student Miranda Tofflemire, who recently donated her pony tail so that it could be made into wigs for children with cancer. I have to say that the funniest moment was when I learned that Miranda's social science class had made political trading cards for a project, and two students made cards of me on them: a picture on the front and statistics on the back. Next thing I knew, I was handing out autographs.

So what did I learn in school today? I learned that the programs and partnerships these schools have developed along with the excellent school and community spirit they foster are a tremendous asset to Ottawa–Orléans and to this province.

## STUDENT LITERACY

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** Ask any student—well, maybe any parent—what is the most important skill for children to learn in school, and I suspect they would say reading. That is why I rise to share the good news that the province-wide results of grade 10 testing released yesterday by the Education Quality and Accountability Office show that pass rates continue to improve and are up to 82%, from just 77% in 2003.

Students, parents, teachers and school boards deserve to be congratulated for the work they've done to improve these results. In particular, I want to draw attention to the improvements made by English-as-a-second-language students. Fifty per cent of ESL and ELD students passed this year, compared with a low of 34% in 2002-03.

As the EQAO board of directors chair, Charles Pascal, said, "Literacy is an essential foundation required by every student to participate and thrive in a knowledge-based economy."

Among other accomplishments, this government has invested over \$1.1 billion in education. More than 7,500 elementary teachers are beginning the year with specialized training in reading instruction, and more than 1,300 schools have smaller classes in the primary grades to boost student literacy.

Today, we celebrate the contributions exceptional educators, administrators and communities make in our classrooms, and the promise that we will continue to invest so that each and every student can read and write with confidence.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students / *Projet de loi 3, Loi visant à protéger les élèves anaphylactiques*, is amended to read An Act to protect anaphylactic pupils / *Loi visant à protéger les élèves anaphylactiques*.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.



## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** On May 4, 2005, the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Mr. Tascona, rose on a question of privilege concerning a list of intended appointments to yet-to-be-created government bodies known as local health integration networks. This list was recently submitted to the standing committee on government agencies. According to the member, the government was in contempt of the House for presupposing the passage of enabling legislation when it advertised publicly for persons to be appointed to the networks, and when it then went ahead and hired people as if the networks were a fait accompli. The member for Niagara Centre, Mr. Kormos, the government House leader, Mr. Duncan, and the member for Erie-Lincoln, Mr. Hudak, also spoke to this matter.

Having had an opportunity to review the relevant precedents and authorities, I will now address the points that were raised by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. The member indicated that government advertisements presupposed that enabling legislation would pass. Additionally, the member indicated that the government's submission of the list of intended appointments to the standing committee on government agencies presupposes the existence of enabling legislation, because the outcome of the hiring process was based on the incorrect premise that the legislative or regulatory framework existed.

Let me say at the outset that I do not interpret the referenced statements, seen in context, as undermining the authority of the House or its legislative function. The statements are rather innocuous, they make no connection to a bill before the House, they do not presume the existence of a specific legislative or regulatory regime, and they must be balanced with the other statements on the government's Web site that make specific mention of the government's intention to introduce enabling legislation. For example, the May 2, 2005, bulletin 11 document mentioned by the member indicates that the government "intends to introduce legislation" to effect the requisite changes, and that "legislation will be needed to enable [the networks] to perform certain functions that are envisioned for [them]...."

The use of the words "intends," "legislation will be needed," and "envisioned" suggests that the government was aware of and showing consideration for the legislative function of the assembly.

## 1350

As to the issue of the appointments themselves, it must be noted that Speakers of this assembly have not found fault with broadly similar intended appointments to bodies that have yet to be created. In this regard, I refer to the following precedents:

In 1997, Speaker Stockwell ruled that it was not a matter of privilege or contempt that the government had sent to the standing committee on government agencies a notice of an intended appointment to the Education Improvement Commission in circumstances where the bill

creating the commission was still before the House. That ruling can be found at page 6577 of the Hansard for January 29, 1997.

In 2000, Speaker Carr ruled that a prima facie case of privilege was not established in circumstances where the government's Public Appointments Secretariat was recruiting appointments for the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, despite the fact that the bill creating that body was still before the House. Speaker Carr stated that "various Speakers have made it clear that the public service has a responsibility to prepare itself and stand in readiness for the possible passage of legislation." He found the circumstances to be an exercise of "due diligence on the part of the public service in preparation for pending legislation." That ruling can be found at pages 5799 and 5800 of the Hansard for November 27, 2000.

In 2002, Speaker Carr had to deal with a situation where a proposed university or the government had created a Web site and hired university staff in circumstances where the legal existence of the university was contingent on the passage of a bill that was currently before the House. In ruling that a prima facie case of contempt was not established, Speaker Carr found that it had not been shown that the impugned actions were something other than planning for the proposed university. According to Speaker Carr, the hiring of staff and the creation of a Web site did not suggest contempt. That ruling can be found at page 549 of the Hansard for June 3, 2002.

For these reasons, I find that a prima facie case of contempt has not been established.

This leaves one final matter for consideration. According to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, the standing committee on government agencies has no jurisdiction to consider the appointments to the networks because of the absence of enabling legislation. I have given careful thought to this jurisdictional issue, and although it is really a matter of order on a potential item of business before a forthcoming meeting of the standing committee, in view of the fact that today is the deadline to select intended appointments for review, I will rule on the matter. In this regard, I note that at page 6577 of the above-mentioned January 29, 1997, ruling dealing with intended appointments to the Education Improvement Commission, Speaker Stockwell stated the following:

"I find nothing in the referral of a certificate of intent to appoint these two candidates which would in any way limit or compromise the ability or rights of a committee to conduct a review under the terms of the standing orders.

"The fact that the appointments are contingent on the passage of legislation does not impact on the committee's review. I want to note here that this is not the first time the committee has reviewed an intended appointee prior to passage of legislation which establishes the agency, board or commission.

"In 1991, the committee reviewed and concurred in the intended appointment of the Employment Equity

Commissioner. Some members who were here during that period of time may recall that the legislation that provided for the Employment Equity Commissioner was not passed in this Legislature until 1994, but the appointment took place in 1991."

In closing, I would like to thank the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for raising these matters, and the member for Niagara Centre, the government House leader and the member for Erie-Lincoln for their helpful submissions.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I rise in my place today to bring to your attention and to the attention of all of my colleagues in this House the fact that this is Mental Health Week in Canada. This is a week for us to reflect as a society on a problem that, to be perfectly frank, we spend too much of the rest of the year ignoring. Hopefully, this is a week for us to reflect collectively on the fact that we do not do as well on mental health as we should, and hopefully this is a week for all of us to decide to do better, because mental illness has been stigmatized for too long. It affects too many of us, it hurts too many people, destroys too many families and costs us all too much in too many ways. One in five Canadians—roughly six million people; two million of them here in Ontario—will be affected by mental illness in their lifetime. Consider that number. Consider the fact that these people all have friends, families and loved ones, and reflect on just how many of us will be affected by mental health.

It is estimated that mental illness costs us as a society almost \$15 billion per year. This is a huge problem. Yet it is one that we still have trouble acknowledging, talking about and dealing with. The Canadian Mental Health Association estimates that 49%, essentially half, of all the people who have suffered from depression or anxiety have never talked to a doctor about their problem, such is the stigma of mental illness. So, while there is much that we can do and are doing as a government to fight mental illness—and I'll be talking about that in just a moment—there is something just as important that we must all do as members of our society: fight the stigma. Talk about mental illness. Get others talking. Make it an acceptable topic of conversation, like the fight against cancer or heart disease. It is only by acknowledging that it is a problem that we can properly tackle it as an issue.

I'm proud of the steps our government has taken to help fight mental illness and to reverse what has almost amounted to a tradition of neglect in this province. Last year we increased base funding for community mental health by \$65 million—the first such increase in 12 years. That funding has enabled the hiring of some 156

mental health professionals. As a result, 13,000 additional people have been helped. By 2008 we will have expanded community mental health services to the point where they are helping an additional 78,000 patients annually.

Part of last year's investment was \$27.5 million in an initiative to help keep people suffering from mental illness out of jail. Since 1995 there has been a 27% increase in the number of mentally ill patients admitted to correctional facilities in Ontario. In too many of these cases, they would not have wound up there had they been receiving the help and support that they need in the community. This initiative will provide services to an additional 12,000 non-violent offenders with mental illnesses, including crisis response and outreach, court support and supportive housing—badly needed alternatives to incarceration, in other words.

We also announced an increase of more than \$4 million for substance abuse and withdrawal management services and an extra \$25 million in children's community mental health programs. That will help an additional 7,000 children per year. In addition to these investments, we also struck a deal with the Ontario Medical Association that contains several provisions to improve mental health care in this province: incentives to support physicians in providing comprehensive primary mental health care; provisions to recruit, retain and better reward psychiatrists; and financial recognition of GP psychotherapists.

Finally, of course, we announced the first 55 of our 150 family health teams, which will deliver the very best kind of comprehensive primary care, including mental health care, to many patients across this province, when they need it, where they need it, and as close to home as possible in their communities.

We've done a lot in this past year in taking up the battle against mental illness. We have, as they say, made a pretty good start. We have a long way to go, and that's a challenge that we are happy to take up. But as I said earlier, just as important as the investments we make as a government are the efforts we make as a society to erase the stigma around mental illness. I would urge all of my colleagues to help in this regard this week and going forward, working toward a time when we don't need to have Mental Health Week in this province or country.

1400

### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** It's a great privilege for me to rise in the House today to talk about an important issue facing all Ontarians: drunk driving. The good news is that the number of fatal drinking and driving crashes has fallen by 35% in the last 10 years. However, drinking and driving is still a factor in about one quarter of all fatal collisions in Ontario.

Every year about 16,000 people are convicted of drinking and driving in Ontario. That is a rate of about



two every hour. In 2003, more than 200 people died in drunk driving collisions. More than 500 were seriously hurt. In nine out of 10 drinking and driving deaths, the drinking driver was a male. Most impaired drivers involved in collisions are between 19 and 24 years old. The summertime is the deadliest for drinking and driving collisions; nearly twice as many people are killed in the summer months as in the winter.

We need to get the message out now. Earlier today, I helped officially launch the Arrive Alive-DRIVE SOBER campaign. It is held each year by one of our biggest safety partners on this issue, the Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving, in short known as OCCID. I want to thank them very sincerely on behalf of our government for providing outstanding leadership in this very serious and important manner.

Our government is also working with police, and a number of other road safety groups like MADD and Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving. I have been working on this issue, along with our safety partners, to raise public awareness. I strongly support and take part in the holiday RIDE program, MADD's red ribbon campaign, conferences on impaired driving, public service announcements and especially this recent Arrive Alive-DRIVE SOBER campaign.

Our government also launched the iDRIVE campaign last year. It includes a video by and for young people to raise awareness about dangerous driving, including impaired driving. Twenty-two hundred copies have been distributed to schools, community groups, public health offices and police. I am pleased to report today that another 2,200 copies have been ordered this year.

Ontario has the safest roads in North America. But road safety doesn't just happen; it takes an ongoing commitment year after year. The theme of this year's OCCID campaign is Choose Your Ride. We want to convince people to make responsible choices this summer. When you choose your ride, you will avoid ending up in the back of a police cruiser, an ambulance or a hearse. This is what can happen when people choose to drink and drive. Instead, we urge people, if they drink, to make responsible choices. You could take a taxi or use a designated driver.

Ontario has some of the toughest anti-drinking and driving laws in this country. A drunk driving conviction costs about \$20,000, but it could cost you more: It could cost you your job, your plans, your family and your life. I want to urge all members to join with me in urging everyone to make responsible choices this summer. Choose not to drink and drive. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Responses?

#### MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I am pleased to rise today on behalf our party to recognize Mental Health Week. The Canadian Mental Health Association launched the 54th annual Mental Health Week on

May 2. This year's theme is mind and body fitness, which focuses on the connection between physical and mental health.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, one in five Ontarians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and one in eight will be hospitalized for mental illness at least once in their life, more than are hospitalized for cancer and heart disease.

Left undiagnosed and/or untreated, mental health and addiction problems cause large productivity losses. They have been estimated as amongst the most costly of all our health problems for service providers, taxpayers, employers and insurers, and that doesn't take into consideration the human cost. Mental health claims, especially depression, have overtaken cardiovascular disease as the fastest-growing category of disability costs in Canada.

This week, the Centre for Mental Health and Addiction also launched their Transforming Lives awareness campaign to challenge stigma. The campaign focuses on the personal stories of Ontarians' experiences with mental illness, including stories from the Honourable James Bartleman and former federal finance minister the Honourable Michael Wilson.

Because mental illness is such an invisible disability, it is often forgotten in the development of policies and practices, both in legislation and within individual organizations. As legislators and lawmakers, we must commit to including mental health in the health care fold and help to do what we can to eradicate the stigma associated with mental illness.

During the committee hearings on Bill 8, I was pleased to introduce amendments recognizing that the promotion and treatment of illness must include not just physical illness but also mental health. I would encourage all members of this House to recognize the stigma that is associated with mental health and do what they can to eliminate it.

#### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey):** In response to the Minister of Transportation's announcement today, I want to congratulate the minister. I think it's proper for him to urge all members to help get the message out to Ontarians that we will not tolerate drinking and driving in the province. I congratulate the minister for participating in the 16th annual OCCID—which is the Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving—campaign.

But, Minister, in addition to encouraging Ontarians not to drink and drive, you should have been responding today to what MADD Canada has said to you and what I raised in the House just before Christmas.

As of today you still haven't hired the 1,000 police officers to make our roads safer and to get impaired drivers off the road. MADD Canada's report indicated that between 50% and 90% of convicted drunk drivers don't sign up for a course on the dangers of drinking and driving, which they're required to do by law. They don't complete the Back on Track program.

MADD Canada's report also said that of up to 16,500 people convicted of impaired driving each year, only 2,000, or 12%, actually complete the necessary steps to get their drivers' licences back. That means there is a soaring number of convicted impaired drivers driving on our roads without insurance or a driver's licence right now as we speak.

Minister, you have to address this problem. Only 12% of 16,500 convicted impaired drivers each year bother to take the steps required under the law to get back their driver's licence and their insurance. It's a serious problem. That is a lot of people on the road without proper documentation and, more importantly, without the proper training so that they won't repeat their mistakes of the past and once again drive impaired and perhaps kill someone on our highways.

I need you to address that. You've never gotten back to me. MADD Canada tells me today that, yes, the staff of Mothers Against Drunk Driving and your ministry staff are talking. They need to meet with you, and you need to address the report. Yes, it's good that you joined with OCCID today and encouraged people not to drink and drive this summer and, I would add, any summer or at any time. I appreciate that, but would you sit down with MADD Canada and address a very serious problem: the report they put together based on your own ministry's statistics.

The last time I raised it, you said their statistics were wrong. At least now you admit their statistics are right. Do something about the problem.

1410

### MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** It's a pleasure for me to make some comments on behalf of the NDP on Mental Health Week in Canada. I want to begin by acknowledging the need for society to recognize a couple of things:

First, mental illness and addictions are serious health issues for many Ontarians, their families and friends. Twenty per cent of the general population will suffer from a mental illness or addiction in their lifetime.

Secondly, if untreated, mental health and addictions cause very serious productivity losses in the economy, not to mention the loss of control, the loss of hope and the feeling of helplessness suffered by both those who are affected and their families and friends as they watch someone spiral into a downward depression.

Thirdly, mental health and addiction funding cannot continue to be marginalized among the broad range of health care services and health care programs we deliver that are funded by government.

Fourthly, even though a lot of work and effort have gone into ending the stigma attached to mental illness and addictions, we must be ever vigilant in stamping out those old-fashioned, outdated and really irresponsible views that would still have mental illness viewed as something negative or something fearful.

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario division, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs made a presentation to the pre-budget consultations in Whitby on January 20, 2005. I was on the committee that day and heard their presentation, and I'd like to spend the rest of my time repeating what they said in that pre-budget submission.

"Although, as we have noted, the government has made the first investment in community mental health in many years, it has served only as a first step. The needs of people with mental illness and addiction in Ontario are still extremely urgent. There has been much ground lost over the past decade that must ... be recovered. We would like to encourage the government to proceed with their committed investments in consultation with providers at a rapid pace. It is vitally important that the government continue its commitment to increased annualized base ... funding for the mental health sector, and this funding should be extended to addictions services as well. It is also key that the existing funding in the mental health and addictions sector is protected, so that agencies serving various constituencies are not reallocating their existing mental health and addictions funding to other priorities. Ensuring a net gain of investment is the basic requirement for the sector."

They went on to make five recommendations to the committee, and essentially to the government, with respect to what should be in the budget.

One, "Consumers of mental health and addiction services and their families must be at the centre of reform and the government's health transformation agenda...."

"Investment into consumer and family initiatives is a key component of putting the consumer at the centre of the system and providing a much-needed continuum of care for people with mental illness. The success of peer support services and consumer-run initiatives indicates the importance of their role within the mental health and addictions sector...."

"Unfortunately these organizations are not able to play the key role they should in the support of people living with mental health and addictions. None of the investments the government has made thus far, while they have been greatly appreciated, are supporting consumer and family initiatives...."

Two, "The needs of diverse, rural and remote communities must be recognized...."

"Issues such as transportation to services, adequate human resources, access to technology and availability of primary care pose unique challenges for rural and remote areas of the province, and the specific needs of these communities are often overlooked."

Three, "A continuum of services and supports from community-based to hospital care must be available...."

Four, "Programs which prevent and reduce homelessness must be supported."

"People with addictions and mental illness ... are at greater risk of homelessness because their housing, employment and income options are often limited."



The group recommended a number of things the government could do:

“Create more supportive and affordable housing including housing with an emphasis on harm reduction....

“Create safe houses and crisis beds so that people experiencing episodes of acute mental illness can be stabilized before they need hospitalization and a loss of housing occurs;

“Improve access to case-management services....

“Expand shared care teams in emergency shelters and drop-ins....

“Ensure emergency shelters have adequate funding to provide higher levels of support and care for people with mental illness and addictions....”

Five, “The focus on concurrent disorders must be enhanced....

“Research has shown in some clinical populations that 40% to 50% of people with any current substance use disorder showed a concurrent mental health problem....

“Given the prevalence of concurrent disorders, it is clear that both mental health and addiction services must receive significant investment to truly address the needs of Ontarians.”

Finally, number six: “The mental health and addiction sector’s participation in e-health strategies must be supported,” and the government must pay for that technology.

As we acknowledge this week as Mental Health Week across Canada, I urge the government in its budget to implement some of the recommendations that were made by these groups.

## VE DAY

### JOUR DE LA VICTOIRE EN EUROPE

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I ask unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes in recognition of VE Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** This month has special significance for people here in Ontario, across Canada and our friends in Europe. Today, I will ask members to pause to remember two very different days in May: One was a moment of heartbreak, the other a cause for celebration.

On May 10, 1940, the people of the Netherlands hid themselves in their basements and bomb shelters as enemies marched across their border. For years they lived in fear—fear of the soldiers in the streets; fear of being dragged from their homes late at night; fear of the occupiers that at first humiliated them, then enslaved them and finally starved them. Five years later, in the early days of May 1945, the Dutch poured out of their homes and into the streets. They danced with the young Canadian soldiers who had come to free them from oppression, to free them from fear.

Today is a national holiday in the Netherlands, the 60th anniversary of the bevrijding—the liberation. Millions of people, young and old, will attend ceremonies held across the country. Minister Gerretsen, who is one of the thousands of Dutch people who immigrated to Canada after the war, is there to represent our province. On this day, and it seems every day, in the Netherlands every Canadian is a hero and every Dutch citizen is a friend.

In the city of Groningen, there is a forest of 30,000 maple trees commemorating the bravery of Canadian soldiers. It’s called the Liberation Forest, and when it was planted, a poem was written. Its closing lines read, “To commemorate them we dedicate a forest yet / Maple leaves fell for us, lest we forget.”

The Dutch have never forgotten the sacrifices Canada’s young people made so long ago, and neither should we. We should not forget the struggle they endured, the long months of fighting through the towns and cities of France, the forests of Belgium and the flat, open fields of Holland. We should not forget the more than 45,000 lives that were sacrificed in the air over Britain, in the cold seas of the North Atlantic, at Dieppe, Juno Beach, Italy and Hong Kong. We should not forget either the ones they left behind: their mothers, their fathers, their families, their sweethearts. Although we can never imagine the sacrifices our veterans made, we must never, ever forget.

And we must never forget as well those they liberated 60 years ago from an unspeakable evil: the men, women and children who were saved from places like Kamp Westerbork, and the six million who died. In overcoming the horrors of the Holocaust and embracing life again, the survivors inspire all of us to believe in the power of the human spirit. Their stories too must never be forgotten.

Last night, I did a bit of research and learned that Kamp Westerbork was a Nazi concentration camp located in northern Holland that was liberated by the Canadians. But before our soldiers arrived, and over the course of the previous two years, 93 trains had stopped at Westerbork to pick up over 100,000 men, women and children. These Jewish families were taken to places like Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, where they were murdered in gas chambers. The very last train to leave Westerbork before the soldiers arrived, the last train to leave for the death camps, had as one of its passengers a beautiful young woman, 15 years of age, by the name of Anne Frank.

## 1420

Robert Engel was a young man in prison in Westerbork, and he told of his experience when the camp was liberated by Canadians. He tells us that when the Canadian convoy stopped at the headquarters of the camp’s SS guards, someone hoisted a huge Dutch flag and the crowd began singing every national anthem they could think of: the Wilhelmus for Holland, God Save the King for Britain, the Marseillaise for France and Hatikvah for Israel.

Then, he writes, "All of a sudden these soldiers, our liberators, started singing. We didn't know the song, had never heard it, but we knew instinctively that it was an important song. They sang it with such pride, standing there with their dirty faces beaming.

"Their eyes were proud and smiling; by golly, they were beautiful. That song became, for me," he writes, "the most beautiful song in the world. They sang ... O Canada."

Mr. Engel writes: "And we were free."

By the way, Mr. Engel went on to become one of the founding members of the Jewish Holocaust Survivors of Canada.

Today, there are approximately 100,000 veterans of the Second World War in Ontario. Even though the average age is 82—long past retirement—many remain active and involved in their communities, sharing their memories with students and young people; working in churches and community organizations. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, they have given so much for so long to so many.

This week we have an opportunity to give something back. This Sunday, I encourage Ontarians to join me as we cheer on more than 1,000 veterans who are coming here to Toronto to march in a victory parade. The parade will start at Fort York and pass under the winged statue of Victory at the Princes' Gates. It's a chance to show our appreciation. It's an occasion to celebrate the contribution of our veterans. It's an opportunity to tell them that we've listened, that we will remember and that we will never forget.

Il y a 60 ans, ces braves hommes et femmes ont libéré un pays qui vivait dans la peur et la famine pour qu'aujourd'hui, notre pays puisse vivre dans la liberté et la prospérité. Ils et elles sont venus à la rescousse d'un pays déchiré par la guerre pour que nous puissions vivre dans la paix.

I'm pleased to report that all parties in the Legislature are working together to construct a veterans' memorial right here on the grounds of Queen's Park. This memorial will be a fitting, lasting tribute to the heroism, dedication and loyalty of our armed forces members, past and present, in times of war and in times of peace. The memorial will be built on the front lawn of Queen's Park, visible and accessible to everyone who comes to visit. In fact, this is the first time in 60 years that approval has been given by the Legislature to erect a structure on its lawns. It's our goal that the memorial will be constructed before the end of this year.

Sixty years ago, brave Canadian men and women liberated a country that had known fear and hunger so that today our country may know freedom and prosperity. They rescued a country torn apart by war so that we may know peace. They sacrificed their youth so that our young people could be safe. They gave their lives so that we could live ours in freedom.

So let us always remember, honour and thank all those who served, those who helped here at home and those who continue to serve.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I am honoured to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize Victory in Europe Day, to be celebrated this Sunday, May 8. I have been asked by our leader, John Tory, to deliver these remarks in light of my personal family ties to this special day.

I speak today as a native of Holland and as a proud Canadian. On May 8, we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of war in Europe. In celebration of this 60th anniversary, Canadians will join Europeans, Americans and British to honour and acknowledge the efforts of the men and women from every walk of life whose service and dedication helped to liberate Europe. There will be a huge veterans' parade in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, this Sunday.

This victory for freedom did not come without sacrifice, and we remember the thousands who gave their lives so that we might have freedom today. Although May 8 will be the focal point of the VE celebrations, the official memorial services and liberation celebrations have been taking place all week in the Netherlands, and many of our veterans are there. Yesterday was Dutch Remembrance Day and today is Dutch Liberation Day, a day of celebration. These two days mark the anniversary of the Canadian liberation of Holland 60 years ago.

I have followed the activities of this week with a very keen interest and a very strong desire at times that I wish I was there. This 60th anniversary allows the Dutch, including my relatives, to honour the Canadians who gave their lives for our freedom and to thank those veterans who survived. Indeed, nowhere are our Canadian veterans more honoured and revered than by the Dutch of all ages. For any of you who saw the TV coverage of the ceremony yesterday at Holton, at the Canadian War Cemetery, we saw the Dutch children deliver the flowers and read the poems at the Canadian graves.

It was out of the anguish and horror of this war that there developed a warm and powerful bond of friendship between the Dutch and the Canadians, which continues to this day. The foundations of that special relationship were established during those dark days and years of World War II. When Holland was overrun by the Nazis, Crown Princess Juliana made her wartime home in Canada and gave birth to her third daughter, Margriet, in Ottawa. As a thank you gesture for providing a place of sanctuary for her and her family, as well as in recognition of the role that Canadian soldiers played in the liberation of the Netherlands, Queen Juliana presented Ottawa with 100,000 tulips in 1945, and that tradition and the Tulip Festival continue to this day.

What have I learned from my parents about those days of German occupation? Although I was not born at that time, I have learned about the fear, the hunger, the destruction, but also about the courage, the hope and the freedom.

My mother was one of 13 children who had very little to eat, like so many others in Holland during this time. Each day she eagerly awaited the return of her father



from his work on a farm so that she could share the single orange or other item of food that he brought home for her and her 12 siblings.

1430

I heard about fear—extreme fear. On one occasion as my parents were preparing for their marriage and shopping for dishes, the Nazis started to shoot indiscriminately into the crowd of shoppers and they were forced to flee, with others, for their lives.

I learned about destruction as the Nazis bombed the heart of Rotterdam, including my aunt and uncle's store. In fact, if you've been to Rotterdam and seen the statue, you see the statue with the heart torn out and the uplifted arms. During that bombing, my father and his sister, who had been orphaned during World War I, lost all their photos and documentation related to their parents and their ancestry, and I learned about courage: the courage of the Dutch Underground, where my father served with pride and, of course, the tremendous courage of the Canadian liberators.

It was this courage, this hope and this optimism displayed by the Canadian troops in liberating the citizens of the Netherlands that led to the ties of friendship and respect between Canada and the Dutch. In fact, it was these ties which influenced many Dutch citizens, such as my own parents, to immigrate to Canada after the war. To this day, they, like all those other immigrants, are grateful for the opportunities that have been given to them and to their children and grandchildren.

In this, the Year of the Veteran, and on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of VE Day, let us salute, let us honour and let us say thank you to all those Canadian men and women who participated in the liberation of Europe, and in so doing gave those citizens back not only their freedom but also their dignity.

As a native of one of these European countries, I say a grateful thank you, and I want the veterans to know that you and what you did will live on in our hearts forever.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** On behalf of New Democrats, I'm honoured to be able to say a few words on what is a very important day for Canadians, and obviously a very important day of remembrance for many people in Europe.

I think it's good that Canadians reflect at times like this on what was a catastrophic event for the world and an incredible challenge for Canadians. Many Canadians probably don't know, but at the beginning of the Second World War, Canada had virtually a non-existent armed force. The Royal Canadian Navy in 1939 had only 2,000 sailors, four destroyers, two old destroyers and four minesweepers—not much to go to war with. The Royal Canadian Air Force in 1939 had 298 officers and 2,750 other ranks. They had only 270 aircraft, and only 37 of them were remotely combat-worthy. The army was in even worse shape. In 1939, it had four anti-aircraft guns, five mortars, 82 machine guns, five Bren guns and two out-of-date tanks. That's what Canadians went to war with.

What is astounding is that when victory was declared in the spring of 1945, there were over one million Canadians in the armed forces: 45,000 of them gave their lives; 55,000 were wounded. What's even more astounding is that at that time Canada's population was only 11 million people. It meant that virtually one in 10 women and men served in the navy, the air force, the army or the merchant marine, and one in 20 did not come home.

I think many people need to know that in fact Canadians were often handed the dirtiest jobs in the Second World War. When Britain was alone and Britain didn't have enough food to feed itself, didn't have enough oil or coal for heat, it was Canadians who made the provision and it was the Canadian navy—a very ill-equipped navy—that did the dirty job of escorting ships across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. The best sonar and the best radar and the best equipment went to the destroyers, the aircraft carriers, the cruisers and the battleships. Canadians didn't have any of those. Canadians fought the dirtiest job in the north Atlantic with something called a corvette. People need to know that before the war, the corvette was a whaler. It was a whaling ship. They simply took a whaling ship, put a couple of guns on it, some depth charges and said, "This is what Canadians will fight with." Churchill described the corvette as "cheap and nasty."

By the end of the war, Canada had 123 corvettes, and most of them were produced in places like Thunder Bay, St. Catharines, Owen Sound, Kingston and along the St. Lawrence River—produced by Canadian men and women who went to work like never before.

The Canadian Air Force also, in many ways, had the dirtiest job. When the bomber campaign was put together as a strategic plan to try to bomb Germany into suing for peace, the British and the Americans got the best bases. The Canadian bombers flew from Yorkshire, the furthest distance, and the air bases that were most often cut off by clouds, sleet or snow. The toughest job.

When we invaded Sicily, the British got the plains along the east coast where tanks would work. The Americans got the west coast, on the plains where tanks would work. The Canadians fought their way through the mountains, where the terrain always favoured the defender and it was always to the disadvantage of the Canadians who were trying to attack. Over 500 Canadians lie buried in Sicily today.

Similarly, when the invasion of mainland Italy happened, Canadians often got the dirtiest jobs. Holland, Belgium: the Americans, the British were able to use their tanks on the plains; the Canadians got to fight through the canals, the rivers, the ditches—the toughest fighting, the nastiest fighting. I didn't understand, as a 19-year-old when I was pedalling my bicycle through the Netherlands, why so many people, when they saw the maple leaf, would come out and, gee, they'd want to buy you a beer or a glass of wine. "Come home, have supper with us." I didn't understand what it was about. I was 19 years old.

I soon understood what it was about. People in Belgium and the Netherlands recognize the incredible price that was paid by Canadians, many of them 18, 19, 20 years old. We deserve to remember them; they deserve our recognition of them.

**The Speaker:** I want to thank the respective members for their moving words at a very historic time.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent to have a moment's silence.

**The Speaker:** We have unanimous consent for that, I presume.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, some time ago you said very clearly here in his House that there would be no tax increases in this year's budget. Two days ago you said, "There will be no new taxes in the budget."

I think we've come to know that, in your case, we have to know how to take a close look at the fine print on these things. My question is this: Can you guarantee today that there will be no increases of any existing taxes and no new taxes in next week's budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The answer to that is yes.

1440

**Mr. Tory:** I don't know if this is an occasion for massive celebration; I'm not sure what it is. But you've actually answered a question in a straightforward manner. I can only tell you that I'm delighted. The people of Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I think you'd be interested to hear the supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** The people of Ontario are delighted at this news, too, and let's see if we can get on a roll, because we have now received one straightforward answer to a question—my first since I've been here. Let's try one we've tried before: Have you, Premier, given the Minister of Finance instructions to balance the budget by 2007, yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I don't blame the member at all for his keen interest in the budget. We are very much looking forward to presenting that to the people of Ontario in this Legislature. I'm not going to delve into details, but I can tell you that it is a budget of which we are very proud. I can tell you that it speaks to the basic values of the people of Ontario and it gives effect to their priorities: their health care, their education and their desire to build a more prosperous economy. This budget will do that.

**Mr. Tory:** I'm sorry the Premier didn't go for the double play. You have committed now, and it's good that no new taxes will be levied and no existing taxes will be raised, notwithstanding, I should point out, that people across Ontario will pay double the health tax they paid last year with your McGuinty health tax.

You can't tell us that you've given instructions to your finance minister to balance the budget by 2007, so I would ask you, Premier, have you given him any date, ever, by which time he should balance the budget?

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** History lesson.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Maybe it's time for a little bit of a history lesson. In the not-too-recent past we earned the privilege of serving Ontarians as their government. When we got here we discovered, to our great dismay and the dismay of the people of Ontario, that the people of Ontario had been saddled with close to a \$6-billion deficit which had been hidden from their view. So it is, to say the least, a little odd to receive expressions of concern on the part of the leader of the official opposition, a member of that very government that saddled the people of Ontario with close to a \$6-billion hidden deficit.

I can assure you that, in keeping with our desire to build a strong and prosperous economy, we will bring sound financial management to the people's money.

**The Speaker:** New question? The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** My new question is for the Premier. Premier, in last year's budget your government raised user fees and service charges on just about everything: the cost of renewing a driver's licence, filing a defence in smalls claims court, fishing and hunting licences; you even raised the cost of running occupational health and safety programs in the workplace. Given that you've been very helpful, Premier, to answer so definitively about existing and new taxes—to the delight, I'm sure, of people across the province—I'm sure you'll want to confirm that there will be no increases to any existing user fees and no new user fees or charges in the budget. Can you confirm that?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The Minister of Finance would like to speak to this.

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** I am delighted that the Leader of the Opposition is anticipating, with such excitement and enthusiasm, the budget that we're going to present next Wednesday.

I can simply reiterate that we inherited, a year and a half ago, a financial mess that was almost unprecedented in the history of the province. I can tell him clearly that, over 19 months, we have worked diligently to get on the right track.

I reiterate what the Premier just said: that the budget that we're going to present will be consistent with the values and the aspirations of the 12 and a half million people who call this province home: their desire for a better education system, a better health care system and a much stronger economy. I invite the Leader of the



Opposition to be as enthusiastic on Wednesday next as he was earlier on this afternoon.

**Mr. Tory:** My enthusiasm is waning by the moment because, while the Premier was straightforward and able to confirm that there will be no increases to existing taxes and no new taxes, you have deliberately not answered the question with respect to user fees and various other charges.

Last year we had fishing licences up, hunting licences up, fees for provincial parks up, drivers' licences up, civil court fees up, small claims court fees up, liquor taxes up and health taxes up, and people will pay twice as much this year.

These are a few of the charges that people paid more for last year, the largest one-year tax hike since the days of Bob Rae. I wonder if you can give us a guarantee that none of those charges that went up last year will go up this year. Can you guarantee us that none of those charges that went up year will go up in this year's budget? Can you just deal with that?

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** Here's the guarantee I'll give the Leader of the Opposition: When he starts bringing concrete proposals to this Legislature, he's going to get a heck of a lot more coverage than he has so far. He's been leader of the party now for eight months. We know he's against our health care system; he wants to cut two-and-a-half billion dollars of it. We know he's against the greenbelt. We know that some of his members want to privatize just about everything government does. What we don't know, sir, is what in the world the Leader of the Opposition and his party want to do in a positive sense for this province. I invite him now and again to use this opportunity to put something, anything, on the record.

**Mr. Tory:** The Minister of Finance may have an opportunity to ask me questions in due course, if he's here. Still on the subject of the budget, my final supplementary to the Premier: We've heard now and before that you're considering selling off, in whole or in part, some of the government shares in Teranet. You've refused to rule out selling off the LCBO, and similarly, you've refused to rule out income-trusting the LCBO. Now the prospect of turning the casinos into an income trust has also been raised. Given the worsening financial state, given the hundreds of millions of dollars of spending that is not in your plans that you've done, will you guarantee today that every penny of any asset sale or income trust you do will go to paying down debt, as opposed to dealing with the current operating expense problems?

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** My good friend the Leader of the Opposition didn't have the opportunity of being in this House when we presented last year's budget. We laid out a careful plan dealing with our asset review. We said at that time that we would not make the mistake the previous government made with the 407, which cost the people of Ontario, conservatively estimated, about \$10 billion. One mistake, and we're going to be paying for it for decades. But I will tell him: He may not have been here, but in the budget last year we said clearly that if we realize a value from any assets, we will not use that value

to pay for the operating expenditures in government. We will use that value to make further investments to strengthen this province's economy, its health care system and its education system. I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition would want to support that.

## CHILD CARE

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday your Minister of Children and Youth Services said that any daycare agreement with the federal government would be open to big-box, for-profit daycare chains like the American Knowledge Learning Corp. She called it "flexibility in the system." But last year you said, "We believe as a matter of principle that if there is money available, it should go into our public schools, not our private schools." So you believe that education, once it's formalized in school, should be public, but before school, it can be private.

Premier, your budget is coming up in a few days and what Ontarians want to know is this: Will it go toward community-based, non-profit child care, or will it be chain corporations like Knowledge Learning Corp.?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I know the Minister of Children and Youth Services would like to speak to this.

1450

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'd like a page to come over so that I can send over a page from yesterday's Hansard. I'd like to find where in my statement I said anything about big-box day cares. That's a misinterpretation of what I said.

What I did say is that we are well on our way on our Best Start plan. Very soon, we will be signing an agreement with the federal government that will enhance our Best Start plan. The majority of the spaces in phase 1 will be in schools. At present, the great majority of child care centres that are in schools are not-for-profit. We don't anticipate this trend to change.

The other aspects of our Best Start plan will be screening, early identification of difficulties, hearing screening, as well as speech and language assessments, so that children, by the time they're in grade 1, are ready to learn. It is an excellent plan, and I dismiss the comments from the honourable member opposite.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, I will be happy to quote the minister from yesterday: "We do need to have flexibility in the system ... if we close the for-profit spaces." Minister, you referred to public, not-for-profit child care as "blind ideology." But the reality is that there are a number of studies, some of them done here in Ontario, which show that public, regulated, not-for-profit child care is the best way to go. So why do you refuse to say at this point that you're going to close the door on child care corporations? Why do you refuse to say the words, "It will be publicly provided, not-for-profit child care in Ontario"?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I would just repeat what I said earlier. Our Best Start plan has been heralded as an excellent and a visionary plan for Ontario. It's a made-in Ontario plan. It will have hubs in the schools. Phase 1 will be for junior- and kindergarten-aged students. Phase 2 will be a universal preschool plan, as well as screening for difficulties. Children, by the time they are age six, will be ready to learn, and that's what parents want to hear, not the blind ideology of the member opposite.

**Mr. Hampton:** The McGuinty government refers to blind ideology. The federal government has signed agreements with Saskatchewan and Manitoba. And what have Saskatchewan and Manitoba done? They have, in effect, grandfathered the small, private child care operations, but they have made it clear that any expansion of child care in those provinces going forward will rule out corporate child care. That's what I'm asking the McGuinty government to do.

I refer to a study. University of Toronto economists have shown in repeated studies that non-profit, community-based child care is cheaper and higher quality. Gee, if Manitoba and Saskatchewan can do it, I wonder what the problem is with the McGuinty government. Tell us, Minister, what is it about corporate, profit-driven child care that is so attractive to the McGuinty government?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I can assure the honourable member and this House that we are for quality, regulated child care, and that is what we're pursuing with the agreement with the federal government. The flexibility that I referred to yesterday—not the big-box comments that someone else referred to yesterday—has to do with some of the rural areas that have asked me to keep an open mind on this as we move forward. But make no mistake about it: Our Best Start plan will include regulated child care spaces for the kids of Ontario, hubs to make it seamless for the parents of Ontario and children ready to learn by the time they're age six.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Premier: Isn't it interesting to note that the McGuinty government will not rule out profit-driven corporate child care. You seem to want to skip over those words. In fact, you even voted down a resolution last week calling for not-for-profit, public child care.

But I want to ask the Premier about long-term care, which has some real challenges. The recommendations from the Casa Verde inquest provide a blueprint for the improvements that need to be made. Premier, will the budget next week reflect the investments necessary to improve long-term care? Will the budget reflect the implementation of the recommendations of the Casa Verde coroner's inquest?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I appreciate the opportunity yet

again to address the same question the honourable member has raised quite a few times over the course of the last several weeks. First off, we want to lend words of appreciation to those Ontarians who sat on that jury. The ministry is carefully reviewing the recommendations that came forward, in part measure to take full advantage to inform a piece of legislation that will be forthcoming to the Legislature for consideration, and this, in addition to the fact that we've made very significant financial increases in the long-term-care file over the course of last year and a series of other things on the compliance side, lends us to feel strongly that significant change is under way in the long-term-care sector, improving the quality of lives for Ontario's most vulnerable.

**Mr. Hampton:** Let me ask the Premier this question, then: Yesterday when I asked the Minister of Health about this, about where was the \$420 million in annualized funding for long-term care that you promised before the election, he tried to fudge the numbers by including money for bricks and mortar—construction money—and tried to count that as if it were somehow operating money. Let me be very specific: Will we see in the budget the \$420 million in new operating funding that you talked about and you promised before the election, Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It is disappointing that the honourable member can't acknowledge that investing some \$42 million in ceiling-mounted bed lifts in our long-term-care homes, as part of our commitment to long-term care, is important both to enhance the quality of life for residents and to take some of the pain and pressure off the backs of those workers who are providing such a valuable service on the front lines of health care, this in addition to the fact, evidence as was presented yesterday in response to the misinformation brought forward by the honourable member, that the estimates printed and available to all members of this House showed a \$395-million increase for long-term-care homes in 2004-05 in Ontario.

**Mr. Hampton:** When you talk to the long-term care and nursing home operators, they've received only \$116 million. I wonder where that other money you talk about went to? That seems to be a question Liberals are asking in many places these days across the country.

Premier, you promised a higher standard of care. You said there would be more nurses to support our seniors. Yesterday the Minister of Health tried to say that there are in fact more nurses. He said, "Name a nurse who has been laid off." There happens to have been a nurse here yesterday. Her name is Pat Tarsay. She worked at Shepherd Village, a long-term-care facility in Scarborough. She has been laid off. And in fact Sunnybrook and Women's College is laying off full-time RNs; Joseph Brant is laying off full-time RNs; St. Joseph Health Centre in Windsor is laying off RNs. There are a lot of nurses being laid off. This brings me to the other promise you made: You promised 8,000 new additional nurses would be hired. Will you be hiring 8,000 new additional nurses—



**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I'm very pleased to confirm for the honourable member yet one more time that, as a result of a variety of financial investments our government has made in a variety of different parts of the health care system in Ontario to date toward our very important commitment, we have funded 3,052 new full-time positions. I note from the honourable member's very clever use of language that he likes to talk about notices that may have been issued, but there is a long history in the Ontario health care system where notices issued often do not follow through. I will remind the honourable member that there is only one party with members current in the Ontario Legislature today that does not have a record of cutting funding for long-term care, that does not have a record of cutting funding for hospitals, and that, sir, is the Liberal Party.

### CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRES

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I'm pleased to put a question forward to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Although children's treatment centres across Ontario serve 40,000 children with disabilities, there are over 8,000 additional children on the wait list for therapy. We know that research shows that early intervention in the lives of these children will enable them to achieve their full potential, and it will make a tremendous difference. Minister, a 6% funding increase in the base budgets for children's treatment centres for 2005-06 would reduce the wait list by almost 2,000 children. Will you commit to providing additional funding for children's treatment centres in your upcoming budget?

1500

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I know the honourable member knows that I can't comment on the specifics of the upcoming budget, but I can remind her we did increase in our last year's budget the base funding for treatment centres by 3%. We also put \$24 million in for capital. There was one area of the province that didn't have a treatment centre to service their children, and that was York region and Simcoe county, and we announced that funding earlier this year as well. So we understand, and I agree with the honourable member, that early intervention is very important. We actually put significant monies in our first budget and we'll continue to do so in the future.

**Mrs. Witmer:** In my riding of Kitchener-Waterloo, we have a treatment centre, KidsAbility, with a wait list of about 1,000 children. Minister, are you prepared to invest additional money and provide this children's treatment centre, KidsAbility, and all of the other children's treatment centres with multiyear funding? At the present time, as you know, there is no commitment for funding. Are you prepared to commit to this and ensure that these children with disabilities get the same opportunity as

other children in this province to achieve their full potential?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** As the honourable member knows, we did fund that particular treatment centre in her riding last year. She brought it to my attention; other members from all sides of the House brought it to my attention.

What I would like to ask the honourable member is to turn around and ask her leader what he would do if he cut \$2.4 billion out of the health care system. Which treatment centres would he close down? We've put increases in that sector for the first time in many years. We're very proud of our record and we'll put it up against her leader's any time.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Premier. A new report released today by People for Education reveals that small schools are being closed at nearly double the rate of 10 years ago. Over 14,000 students will lose their schools in the next two years, and despite your repeated promises and those of your minister, schools keep closing. Ontario will lose 36 schools at the end of June.

The problem is funding. You have not changed the former Conservative funding formula to protect small schools, and now boards are caught between a rock and a hard place. Premier, when will we see the changes to the funding formula that you promised?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** It's always good to hear from my thespian friend, who brings a certain grandeur to this Legislature which is often missing.

Here are some basic facts: The NDP, on their watch, closed 155 public schools; the Conservatives, on their watch, closed 503 public schools. At the same time, sadly, 266 private schools opened. We have, thus far, invested \$1.1 billion more into public education, and we have established a new \$280-million fund to leverage over \$4 billion in capital investments to repair, expand and replace schools across Ontario. I'll put our record against those records any day.

**Mr. Marchese:** Premier, 44 schools closed last June under your watch; 36 schools were closed in June of this year—this in spite of the promises you made that small schools wouldn't close.

Yesterday, I visited parents and students at the Fourway school in Thunder Bay. Fourway and six other schools are slated to close. You've appointed a facilitator to review the closure, but you know that won't make a difference. The school is being forced to close because the money just isn't there.

During the last campaign, you and your minister promised to fix the funding formula. You're still using the same Conservative funding formula to protect small, rural and northern schools. You haven't kept that promise and schools are still closing. Premier, when will we see

changes to the Conservative funding formula that you promised, that you are still using. When?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I beg to differ with my friend. The fact is, we have made changes. For example, we've provided a \$31-million fund to keep good schools open, specifically targeting rural and remote communities. We understand that one size does not fit all, and the change that we make speaks to the fact that we believe that, while schools may open and close in the natural order of things—and we never, ever said that was not going to continue—we've always said that the decision driving a school closure should depend entirely on meeting the interests of students. So we have changed the formula, we provided more funding, and we're working with our boards.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, in 1998, the city of Brampton opened a small business enterprise centre. We recognize that small business is the heart of Ontario's thriving economy. In the city of Brampton, small business is the major economic driving force and the primary creator of jobs. In fact, more than 76% of businesses in Brampton have fewer than 10 employees. The small business enterprise centre was established so that ingenuity could turn into strategy, and then success.

Since it opened, the enterprise centre has fielded more than 100,000 inquiries, conducted over 3,000 free consultations and has assisted with over 8,000 business registrations. Minister, what is our government doing to support entrepreneurs and small business in Ontario?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre for the great work that she's doing, being a champion for small business. She's doing an outstanding job.

You know, our government understands how important small business is to Ontario's economy. In fact, 99% of businesses are small- and medium-sized businesses, and they account for over 50% of all the new jobs that are created in Ontario.

Recently, I'm very proud of the fact that we announced our new small business agency, which will find ways to cut down on the paper burden that businesses have to deal with. This small business agency will also work with ministries to review regulations, to streamline the entire process. It will also be a champion to advocate on behalf of small business. These are some of the initiatives that it will undertake, and we're doing a lot more when it comes to helping small business, like increasing the small-business threshold eligible for tax exemption.

**Mrs. Jeffrey:** The Brampton Small Business Enterprise Centre is an agency that assists entrepreneurs or small business leaders with resources, information and consultation with trained business consultants. Today,

there are 44 small business enterprise centres in Ontario that are currently funded by all three levels of government. While I applaud the initiative that your ministry is taking to support small business, I am concerned that this new initiative may mean less support for the small business enterprise centres. Minister, can I assure the residents of Brampton that our government will continue to financially support the small business enterprise centre?

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** The small business enterprise centres do a great job in our communities. I want to reassure the member that we will continue to do all we can to support their work.

Small business enterprise centres help small enterprises during the first five years of operation by providing them with information on management, marketing, technology and financing. They also deliver MEDT's successful youth programs such as Summer Company. Over the last fiscal year, the enterprises handled over 240,000 general inquiries, delivered 25,000 in-depth consultations, over 3.5 million client interactions occurred on the Web site, and there are a number of other initiatives undertaken by small business enterprise centres. They are an integral part of our communities, and they will continue to operate.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Premier. Last week, I asked a question in the House of the Minister of Education and also of the Chair of Management Board with regard to all of these announcements relating to a framework for teachers' settlements. The question that I specifically put at the time was, will you guarantee that the funding for teachers' salaries will not come out of other envelopes within the education budget?

1510

I didn't get an answer then, but what I did find out yesterday was that one board, the York region board, is now in negotiations with those who provide transportation to the students to claw back 5% of their budget, this at a time when they're already calling for additional funding just to secure the safety of those children who are being transported.

Premier, can you confirm today that that is part of your strategy, that other envelopes are going to be robbed—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The member opposite is just really, really stretching on this one. It takes a lot of creativity to turn what is an absolutely wonderful news story for Ontario students into something negative.

If things work out—there's still some work left to be done and, finally, it's up to the teachers—we're about to bring to bear something that's never happened before in the province of Ontario: four-year contracts that will allow peace and stability to reign supreme in our schools.



We're proud of the investment we're making in public education: \$1.1 billion. I'd ask the member opposite, how is he bringing comfort to parents who may be watching this today, when he and his leader are committed to investing in private schools? How does that lend comfort to parents who are committed to public education?

**Mr. Klees:** Premier, I don't believe that any parent watching your answer today is getting any level of comfort from what you believe is important about the safety of their children who are being transported in buses. Some 200 companies, transporting over 800,000 students every day, are at your doorstep, appealing funding.

I have a letter here addressed to the Minister of Education: "Despite my personal note of January 14, 2005, and three unanswered telephone calls to your office, we have heard nothing." This is from the Ontario School Bus Association, which wants to talk to you about a lack of funding to ensure the safe transportation of children.

You have avoided my question. Parents watching are wondering about your credibility. What is it that you're going to do about this incredible conflict you're facing: doling out billions on one hand and—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Premier.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Just so we have the facts straight here, this past year we increased funding for buses and school transportation by \$685 million. That's a 5.1% increase. Every single school board in Ontario received more transportation funding this year, at least 2% and as much as 12%.

The member may be interested in learning that the York school board transit funding went up by \$570,000 this past year. So I'd ask him, I would encourage him, to take a close look at the facts and to understand that our commitment on behalf of Ontario public schools is to invest, not only in better-quality education, but at the same time continue to invest in good-quality transportation for our kids.

## GAMBLING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Ontario casinos make it very, very difficult for problem gamblers to quit their habit; in fact, they pull out all the stops to bring troubled people who have hard-core gambling problems back to the tables. They provide perks, like dinners, limousines, free hotel rooms, free concert tickets—all kinds of incentives.

According to the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., offering these perks is good business. Minister, do you agree, or will you move to stop the perks?

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** We believe that gaming in this province needs to be delivered in a socially responsible fashion. To that end, I announced back in January that we would be stationing counsellors on the floor of

the commercial casinos to assist those people who have problem gambling and the associated risks. We've taken that initiative. In addition to that, we've also designated that \$4 million would be invested in problem gambling public awareness campaigns over the next two years. This is all designed to assist people who are facing problem gambling, and it's particularly targeted at our youth, who are the most vulnerable. So it is important that we deliver gaming in this province in a socially responsible way, and that's what we've done.

**Ms. Horwath:** Minister, your gambling agency spokesperson said that inducing gambling addicts is good business.

The nurse who stole \$1 million out of a Hamilton health sciences program for cleft lips and palates said that those perks helped her to get back to the tables. Now an important health program for children in Hamilton is out a million bucks because you continue to allow gamblers to be targeted and hurt financially by unseemly casino marketing ploys that feed their addictions. If a McGuinty government won't stop the perks, won't stop that unseemly program, at least arrange to repay the million bucks that the cleft lip and palate program is out in Hamilton.

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** I find it a little disconcerting that—I know this is a new member of that caucus, but she has been here for quite a while and she should be familiar with the history of her own party. In fact, it was her party, under Bob Rae, that brought in legalized gambling in this province.

And do you know what? I remind her that it is this government that has taken action to ensure that those who are having problems with respect to gambling are being dealt with in as sensitive a fashion as we can. We are doing the right thing, as I pointed out. We've taken steps to try and reach those people who are having problems. We are doing that with a number of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you, Minister.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I notice that the member from St. Catharines was an irritant down here, and he's out of his seat. I hope you don't provoke any mischief in others so we can have question period proceed.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):** My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Last Friday, Minister, you signed an historic \$602-million agreement with the federal government on affordable housing. For eight years, the previous government didn't build one unit of affordable housing, despite repeated calls that there was a desperate need in Ontario. I wonder if they thought the units would simply build themselves.

Whatever the reason, now Ontario faces affordable housing waiting lists a mile long. And this isn't a big-city issue only; there's an affordable housing crisis across the

province because of the lack of investment for more than eight years.

Minister, can you tell the House more about why our government is making this particular commitment to affordable housing?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I want to thank the member for the question. Premier McGuinty and our government believe that shelter is a basic human right, a basic human need critical to our survival, to our dignity, to our sense of self-worth and to our economic well-being. By investing in affordable housing, we are investing in Ontarians. We are in fact strengthening our province. We are making this commitment to affordable housing because it's the right thing to do for vulnerable Ontarians and for communities right across our province.

I want to contrast that with the comments of John Tory, the leader of the official opposition, on the Goldhawk show on March 29, when he said, in response to one of the callers, "I'll be very honest with you, I'm not a big believer in the government being in the housing business, because I just don't think that governments are good in the housing business."

That's the difference between John Tory and Dalton McGuinty. We have a sense of compassion, we have a sense of responsibility, and John Tory certainly does not.

1520

**Mr. Arthurs:** My constituents in Pickering, Ajax and Uxbridge are, like many Ontarians across the province, very excited about this announcement. I can tell you that the regional councillor from Durham, Maurice Brenner, who's the president of Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp., is very much looking forward to working with the ministry in that regard.

Last week's announcement affects people in my riding and across Ontario who are on affordable housing waiting lists, currently living in homes either that they can't afford or that are substandard. Either way, Minister, their quality of life suffers. Their priorities are different from those of other Ontarians who have good fortune. They don't have the luxury of deciding whether to go to British Columbia or Prince Edward Island for luxury holidays. Instead, they decide whether to go without food or heating or visit a local food bank. Even worse, access to affordable housing could mean the difference between an abused spouse leaving an abusive partner or staying. Can you tell us what results this \$602-million investment, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade, will deliver to Ontarians?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** It does get better. On June 11, just before the Tory leadership, Mr. Tory said, "I believe the lack of affordable housing contributes as a root cause of crime." Last night, Mr. Tory goes up to Lake Couchiching and talks to the Salvation Army homelessness conference about the need for more affordable housing.

No more talk; it's time for action. The McGuinty government will deliver assistance to 20,000 families here in the province, creating over 15,000 units of affordable housing for persons suffering from mental illness,

victims of domestic violence, the working poor, and low-to moderate-income Ontarians; housing allowances to provide immediate assistance to some 5,000 Ontario families; and the best part: an innovative, creative Ontario Mortgage and Housing Partnership and the Home Ownership Market Entry program to give Ontarians the chance for affordable ownership, the Canadian dream.

## FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety, and it concerns double-hatter firefighters, which, as members know, is an issue I've been raising in this House now for three years.

Earlier this week, on Monday, the minister addressed the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs at their convention. During his remarks, he made absolutely no reference to the double-hatter problem: the professional, full-time firefighters who want to serve as volunteers in their home communities in their free time, but who are threatened with the loss of their livelihoods by their union if they do so. The minister took no questions from the floor, even though he knows very well the fire chiefs of Ontario need his help on this issue. Would the minister inform the House why the government continues to ignore this important public safety issue?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I thank the member for his question. I should tell you that the reason I didn't mention it is that, as I'm sure the member and all firefighters in Ontario are aware, for the first time since 1982, this government provided \$30 million to 385 fire services. Every single fire service that qualified got a minimum of \$50,000, to a maximum of \$1 million. That money is earmarked for training.

The member may also know that I spent three days at the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs convention, and I got nothing but praise for what we have done. Not only that, but they've all indicated to me that I've taken a lot of the pressure off the two-hatter issue. At the banquet last night, there was a steady stream of fire chiefs who kept coming up to me and saying, "For the first time in 15 years, we have a government that recognizes the importance of firefighters." I can tell you this: Not only did they say that; we announced it one week and delivered the money the next week. That's the first time that that has ever happened.

**Mr. Arnott:** In his response, the minister alluded to the fire service grant that he announced a few weeks ago as a one-time grant for municipalities for fire service training and equipment. I say again: a one-time grant, for one year only. Surely he wouldn't have the audacity to argue that this solves the problem the firefighters'—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. The Minister of Community and Social Services has behaved so well until now, interrupting.

*Interjection.*



**The Speaker:** Now the Minister of Finance has joined the chorus.

**Mr. Arnott:** Surely this minister wouldn't have the audacity to argue that this solves the problem the fire-fighters' union has precipitated with their aggressive campaign to phase out double-hatters.

My second question is, if the minister is unwilling or unable to legislate protection for double-hatters or endorse my Bill 52, will he at least commit to this House that he will work to ensure that the fire service grant becomes a permanent annual funding program to support the public safety needs of the communities of the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter:** Let me tell you the genesis of this grant. This grant was to allow fire service units to get training. One of the big issues of two-hatters is that small services are saying, "We don't have the expertise to fight a fire, so we need two-hatters. We need these people who have the expertise." This money is going to be used for training, which means they will have expertise within their fire service and will not be as dependent on two-hatters. That is a huge advantage to them. I should also suggest to the member that when they were in government, they promised \$40 million but they never delivered. I can tell you that we made the commitment and we delivered the money—the money is in place. I can also tell you that the fire services of Ontario are absolutely ecstatic about what we've done for them.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is to the Minister of Energy. You say your so-called smart electricity meter is only going to cost \$1 billion. Others who have looked at it say it may well cost over \$3 billion. Low- and moderate-income Ontarians were here today to tell you that it will only drive up their electricity bill with no benefit for them. Can you tell people who were already struggling to pay their electricity bill across Ontario why the McGuinty government wants to go so hard on people who are already struggling on low and modest incomes?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** We reject the notion that smart meters won't benefit all aspects of the income spectrum in this province. Let me be unequivocal: We reject that notion, unlike you. We disagree fundamentally—number one.

Number two, we are addressing the question of the challenges that people of more modest means and modest incomes have with respect to electricity pricing through a variety of means. We have set up special programs, we have established a special fund—my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services. We acknowledge that the challenge of providing affordable electricity to folks of modest means is a difficult and vexing one that is it not easily solved. But this government, unlike previous governments, has made a concerted effort to do

just that by ensuring an adequate and reliable supply of electricity for all Ontarians.

**Mr. Hampton:** The special program the minister talks about was turned down, for example, by First Nations, because they saw it as a cruel joke. But it's worse than that. The local electrical distribution companies are concerned that the McGuinty government is going to hand over the installation and implementation of these so-called smart meters to another costly bureaucracy, which will add even more to the hydro bill. Minister, come clean with people. They don't see any benefit for them, especially low- and modest-income people. Now, when the electricity distribution corporations like Toronto Hydro or Hamilton Hydro have similar concerns, what do you have to offer people? They only see their hydro bill going through the roof at a time when they don't have the money to afford to pay it.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The member opposite is disingenuous in what he's suggesting. The local distribution companies support smart meter initiatives. To suggest they don't is simply not accurate. There are challenges around implementation that this government will face, but let me be unequivocal with the member opposite. We believe smart meters are the way to go. We believe they will save consumers money. We believe, and the facts justify the argument, that they will save money across the income spectrum. We support conservation, unlike that member, whose government cancelled all conservation programs. We believe in hydroelectric and renewable power, unlike that member, who wants more coal plants and whose government shut down the Conawapa deal that had been previously negotiated. And, unlike that member, we will not raise electricity prices 43%, as he did in the first three years of the government that he was a member of.

1530

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As you are aware, your ministry funds the Ontario basic skills program, which provides hands-on experience for employment and improves communications, math and computer skills in a supportive environment to at-risk youth.

In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, Centennial College runs this program with funds from your ministry. Concerns have arisen in my riding as to whether this program will continue to be funded, as it caters to a significant youth population in my riding. In fact—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I'm just trying to get some order in here, please.

**Mr. Berardinetti:** Thank you.

Minister, I just wanted to ask you directly if this program will continue to be funded by your ministry. I know that many people in my riding have asked that question of me, so I'd like that answered for the record.

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'm happy to have the opportunity to put their concerns to rest.

The Ontario basic skills program is a very valuable program for young people that has been delivered by and will continue to be delivered by colleges around the province. Centennial College has been delivering this program in Scarborough for 15 years, and I am happy to tell my colleague, the member from Scarborough Southwest, to let his constituents know that Centennial College will continue to deliver this program. We're very pleased with what they're doing. In fact, over the past year we have provided them with additional funding to help upgrade the skills of young people who have left school early and are returning to pursue apprenticeships or other levels of post-secondary education.

**Mr. Berardinetti:** Thank you, Minister. My constituents will be glad to hear about the government's commitment to providing youth skills and training, especially at Centennial College.

As I mentioned, the Ontario basic skills program does cater to many youth in my riding and, I'm sure, to many across the province. However, there are those youth who wish to access career opportunities in various trades. A number of young constituents I have met with are interested in pursuing careers in bricklaying, carpentry, drywall, painting, welding, auto mechanics and hair-styling, to name a few. However, they need access to gain valuable workplace experience. What has your ministry recently done to ensure that our youth will have the ability to access opportunities for apprenticeships in some of the various trades?

**Hon. Mrs. Chambers:** I should have mentioned this in responding to the first question, but I guess I ran out of time. There is actually more good news in terms of the additional funding we've provided to Centennial College over the last year, because that funding has allowed Centennial to offer Job Connect-type services in helping young people prepare for employment. The majority of the young people in the program we funded over the past year are going to be involved in summer employment this year and then will return to Centennial in September.

In addition to that, we have announced programs for young people who have dropped out of school early. If they go back to school to upgrade their academic skills so that they can pursue an apprenticeship, we are giving them each \$1,000 in scholarships and giving the employers who are giving these young people a second chance a \$2,000 bonus to support that work. We're also expanding our co-op diploma program.

#### CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound—Muskoka):** I have a question for the Premier. The town of Kearney made a Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund application for road work on a road identified in Kearney's roads needs study. The application was for \$795,000 to

upgrade and apply a hard top on an 11.1-kilometre stretch of road. Kearney provided all of the supporting materials and engineering reports required under the COMRIF application process. Kearney was rejected. They received one of your "Dear John" letters, with no explanation and no guidance as to how they might improve on their next round of applications.

Premier, tell me why you won't help municipalities to improve their chances in the next round of applications by providing them some guidance.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I must say, I'm very proud of the work of COMRIF and of the secretariat that we jointly administer with the federal government. When the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka and his party were in government, they played political games—silly partisan political games—with municipalities caught in the middle, with programs like OSTAR, millennium and SCTP. We have removed that entirely. I want the member to know that northern Ontario received almost 40% of the funding in COMRIF, and that municipalities of 10,000 and less received 51% of the applications.

I acknowledge that the previous government left an infrastructure deficit that one program simply cannot clear and that there is nothing wrong with the applications, but the needs are enormous. Now, we have made a substantial movement forward in addressing the infrastructure needs and challenges of Ontario's municipalities. I know that in rounds two and three we will get on to those—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Miller:** The minister talks about political games. That's funny. The mayor of Smooth Rock Falls said that when we were in power we were at least fair. The mayor of Thunder Bay shares the concerns of the mayor of Kearney, and this is a quote: "I need to know what, if anything, we didn't do, as well as what we could have done in terms of the application form (and) in terms of matching up" to have a better chance next time.

A spokesperson for the ministry said that health and safety was the number one focus. Well, Minister, if health and safety was the number one focus, why didn't you approve Smooth Rock Falls's application? Smooth Rock Falls is under a Ministry of the Environment Safe Drinking Water Act work order, and they have until December 31 to comply. What about Rainy River, where they just had a garage burn down when the fire department showed up and the water system didn't work? It got plugged up with rust. What about Blind River, which needed \$400,000 for their water and sewer system because the pipes freeze because they're not down deep enough, and they needed to build a sidewalk in front of the school—

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I think the member is incredibly unfair in his comments. I would rather quote Garfield



Dunlop: "I am pleased that Municipal Affairs Minister John Gerretsen recognized the importance of this project in the local area."

I would like to quote Sault Ste. Marie Mayor John Rowswell: "This is the last issue necessary for our east-end sewage treatment plant. It's absolutely critical."

I'd like to quote Mayor Ruth Lovell of Owen Sound, in Bill Murdoch's riding: "We are delighted to receive this funding. The project will improve the waste water system and will protect the area's natural environment."

I want to quote Ron Oswald, the mayor of Arran-Elderslie: "This is a tremendous benefit for both Grey and Bruce counties."

I want to quote Clint Martin, Guelph/Eramosa mayor: "We're very pleased we got this funding."

I would like to quote Gary McNamara, mayor of Tecumseh: "We should have a shovel in the ground by the end of May."

I'd like to quote Tim Rigby, mayor of—

**The Speaker:** You can do that next time. New question.

1540

#### FUEL DISTRIBUTION SECURITY DEPOSIT

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Finance. In April, I wrote to you regarding Wasaya Petroleum, a First Nations corporation that distributes fuel to remote First Nations in northern Ontario. You are demanding that Wasaya Petroleum pay a \$1-million security deposit to your ministry, when they only collected \$300,000 worth of taxes from the sale of petroleum in the year 2004. You want three times what they take in taxes, in a security deposit. This is a First Nations corporation. They provide fuel to remote First Nations, where the cost of fuel is already through the roof. What are you trying to do, tax the poorest people in Ontario, drive a First Nations corporation out of business? This is totally unreasonable. Will you reverse it?

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** Let us not have the leader of the third party create the impression that somehow we are taxing a native band or any other distributor of fuel out of existence. Because what he's talking about—

**Mr. Hampton:** Who do you think buys the gas?

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** I think my friend wants, really, to be quiet so that I can answer, or maybe he doesn't. What he needs to make clear is that a security deposit is not a tax.

Now, what I want to tell him is, I am not aware of his letters, so I am not aware of the particulars of the situation. He said he sent me a letter in April. I am going to investigate the contents of that letter and respond to him in due course, but let him not create the impression here that we are levying an inappropriate tax on that band, any band, or other entities selling fuel.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** Pursuant to standing order 55, I rise to give the Legislature the business of the House for next week.

On Monday, May 9, in the afternoon, Bill 176, and in the evening, Bill 118.

On Tuesday, May 10, in the afternoon, Bill 194.

On Wednesday, May 11, I encourage all members to be here for the budget motion.

On Thursday, May 12, the opposition response to the budget motion.

#### PETITIONS

##### SENIORS' TRANSIT PASS

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I'm delighted to present this petition to you, to the Parliament of Ontario, and to the minister responsible for seniors.

"Whereas most seniors live on fixed incomes which are eroding every year due to inflation costs and other necessary expenses;

"Whereas most seniors have their freedom severely restricted when unable to go about their daily business, which includes public transit;

"Whereas most seniors should be encouraged to live active, healthy lives—visiting friends, relatives, going shopping etc.;

"Whereas other jurisdictions already provide free local transit passes to seniors, namely, many cities in the USA;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly urge the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and responsible for seniors to ensure that seniors be granted a free TTC pass, and/or introduce legislation that will force the local Toronto Transit Commission to issue free TTC passes."

Since I am totally in agreement with this petition, I will sign my name to it.

##### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This petition has been signed by a number of people from the Hamilton area, and I promised them I would bring it in.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 164 takes away civil liberties and freedom of choice;

"Whereas Bill 164 is an attempt to remove freedom for smokers to exercise their choice in a way that does not bother others;

"Whereas Ontario smokers are paying close to \$1.5 billion to the Ontario Liberal government and more than \$1 billion more to the federal government in tobacco taxes alone;

"Whereas Bill 164 is aimed at punishing smokers and forcing them to make the choices that the government feels they should make;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend Bill 164, respect smokers and provide fair and balanced legislation."

I'm sending it down by way of Elizabeth.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I appreciate your recognizing me today to read this petition, which is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It's been signed by a number of residents from the Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, and it reads as follows

"Whereas the so-called Tenant Protection Act of the defeated Harris-Eves Tories has allowed landlords to increase rents well above the rate of inflation for new and old tenants alike;

"Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal"—ORHT—"created by this act regularly awards major and permanent additional rent increases to landlords to pay for required one-time improvements and temporary increases in utility costs;

"Whereas the same act has given landlords wide-ranging powers to evict tenants;

"Whereas our landlord, Sterling Karamar Property Management, has applied to the Ontario Municipal Board ... to add a fourth high-rise unit to our compound in order to circumvent the city of Toronto restrictions on density and the city's opposition to its project;

"Whereas this project would lead to overcrowding in our densely populated community, reduce our precious green space, further drive up rents and do nothing to solve the crisis in affordable rental housing;

"Whereas this project will drive away longer-term tenants partially shielded from the post-1998 Harris-Eves rent increases, thereby further reducing the number of relatively affordable units in the city core; and

"Whereas before the October 2003 elections Premier McGuinty promised 'real protection for tenants at all times' and a radical overhaul of the pro-developer OMB; and

"Whereas our own MPP ... called for a rent rollback (reduction) at a public event in June 2003 and spoke out against the proposed fourth high-rise at a community meeting in November 2004;

"We, the undersigned, residents of Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To institute a rent freeze until the exorbitant Tory guideline and above-guideline rent increases are wiped out by inflation;

"To abrogate the Harris-Eves 'Tenant Protection Act' and draw up new landlord-tenant legislation which shuts down the notoriously pro-landlord ORHT and reinstates real rent control, including an elimination of the Tory policy of 'vacancy decontrol';

"To keep the McGuinty government to its promise of real changes at the OMB, eliminating its bias toward wealthy developers and enhancing the power of groups

promoting affordable housing, sustainable neighbourhoods and tenant rights."

I will—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ruprecht:** Excuse me, I am finishing this petition. You can be next. Thank you very much.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly regarding the Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements.

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I'll affix my signature to this petition.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I have another petition from residents of the Hamilton area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 20% of the adult population, or 1.8 million adults in Ontario, continue to smoke; and

"Whereas hospitality concepts like bars, pubs, taverns, nightclubs, Legions, bingo halls, racetracks and casinos are businesses with a high percentage of patrons who smoke; and

"Whereas more than 700 businesses in Ontario have invested tens of thousands of dollars each to construct a designated smoking room to comply with municipal bylaws;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Permit properly ventilated and separate designated smoking rooms in hospitality establishments that regulate and control employee and customer exposure to second-hand smoke."

I'm sending it down by way of Cassandra.

1550

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** On behalf of the member from Mississauga West, I offer a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly regarding the Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements.

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I affix my signature to this petition, and hand it to Lindsay, our page.

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"Credit Valley Hospital Capital Improvements:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are

delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I put my signature on this petition as well.

### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition signed by a number of people who are very happy with the minister of infrastructure services, but are very unhappy with the TTC right-of-way. It reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing;

"Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair-Old Weston Road bridge; and

"Whereas this bridge (underpass) will be: (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long), it's dark and slopes on both east and west sides creating high banks for 300 metres, and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street (this was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Since I agree with this petition 100%, I'm delighted to put my name to it, and I hope you don't mind when I do that.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** Although Mr. Levac and I are sharing a petition this evening, we've never had a better presentation on behalf of Mississauga and the Credit Valley Hospital than has been done by Mr. Levac.

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study showed that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

This petition is signed by 10 other people, and I am very pleased to affix my signature here, and present it to Alexandra.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Mr. Bryant moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 176, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, to repeal the Representation Act, 1996 and to enact the Representation Act, 2005 / Projet de loi 176, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, abrogeant la Loi de 1996 sur la représentation électorale et édictant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale.

### The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling): Minister?

**Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I'm going to be sharing my time with my fabulous colleague Dr. Kuldip Kular, the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and the remarkable parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for democratic renewal.

I'm very pleased to open debate for second reading of Bill 176, the Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005, which, if passed, will improve Ontario's democracy by moving ahead in four key areas.

First, this bill will give Ontarians a more direct say on important government decisions, a more direct say than they've ever had before, by allowing the government to establish a citizens' assembly on electoral reform, and a citizens' jury on political finance reform.

The issue of electoral reform is being debated in Legislatures across the country. Here in Ontario, we want to bring that debate directly to the people. Ontarians can, and should, decide for themselves how MPPs are elected to represent them in this House. This bill will give the people of Ontario both the opportunity to have their say and the power to make a choice on electoral reform. The citizens' assembly will look at whether or not Ontario should keep its first-past-the-post electoral system, or change the way in which Ontarians elect their MPPs to this great Legislature. If the assembly recommends change, the government will offer Ontarians the chance to decide the issue in a provincial referendum to be held within our current mandate. The citizens' jury will look at how provincial political parties and election campaigns are funded and make recommendations for improvements. This bill gives shape to both the citizens' assembly and the citizens' jury by allowing Elections Ontario to do something they currently cannot do under the laws of Ontario; namely, to randomly select a diverse and representative pool of candidates from the permanent register of electors.

1600

Participation in the citizens' assembly or the citizens' jury will be voluntary. People whose names are selected from the register will first be contacted by Elections Ontario. Those who agree to become candidates may then be selected to sit as members on either the assembly or the jury. This process is similar to the one established in the province of British Columbia to set up its citizens' assembly on electoral reform.

Second, this bill will preserve the 11 ridings in northern Ontario.

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** Hear, hear.

Over the years, northern Ontarians have seen their representation in the Legislature decline. This government recognizes that all regions of Ontario have an important role to play in building a strong and prosperous province. To do this, all regions must have strong representation in the Legislature. Maintaining 11 ridings in northern Ontario will guarantee an effective voice for the north. This



bill will also add four ridings in southern Ontario, in accordance with federal redistribution undertaken by Elections Canada. This was done, and was necessary, to reflect the population growth in southern Ontario.

Ultimately, this bill, if passed, will make sure that the different perspectives from all of Ontario's regions will be listened to, considered and debated in this House. As a result, all Ontarians will have a voice in shaping the future of our province.

Third, this bill will set fixed election dates. Elections will be held on the first Thursday in October every four years starting on Thursday, October 4, 2007. The right of Premiers to call elections based on partisan and political considerations will be a thing of the past. Furthermore, this bill will set fixed campaign periods at 28 days. All parties and candidates will know when future campaign periods start and end, and everyone will be on a level playing field.

I know that some people have speculated that fixed election dates will in fact mean longer campaign periods, even as the writ periods are set in law. I'm not so sure. I would say that in the last provincial election, for example, where the mandate was more than four years—four and a half years—and where there was significant speculation for many, many months during many, many periods in both 2002 and 2003 that an election might be called—and who knows how close we got to an election being called in the past; I don't know if the co-dean of Legislature, who I think might be speaking to this bill, will be willing to share with us that particular chapter in Ontario's history. Because of that, because we didn't know when the election was going to be called, it meant we had even longer campaign periods than we might have had.

I think the experience in British Columbia is instructive, if you consider how long the campaign has been in place there. Of course, when it begins and ends is a subjective determination, but it will provide a level of certainty that will not only be of assistance and give people confidence, will not only be of assistance to those who are participating in elections—both voters and candidates—but will also mean that we do not have overly extended election campaign periods, which the public have a certain lack of appetite for.

Fourth and finally, this bill will make donations to political parties more transparent to Ontarians by requiring real-time public disclosure on the Internet of political donations. This means that all contributions of over \$100 to a political party or a leadership campaign will have to be reported to Elections Ontario within five business days—not up to a year, as is the case right now. Elections Ontario will then have to post this information, including the contributor's name and the donation amount, on its Web site within five business days. That would be the fastest disclosure time in the nation and one of the fastest disclosure times in the world. This reporting provision would also be retroactive to January 1, 2004. Of course, prior to that, political donations have already been disclosed, pursuant to the annual disclosure. This

will mean real-time disclosure of the whole works since January 1, 2004. As a result of this measure, Ontarians will have a political finance system, if this bill passes, that is more open and transparent than ever before.

In summary, this bill charts the course for meaningful and fundamental improvements to how Ontarians govern themselves. It will involve Ontarians directly in an open and honest debate on how MPPs are elected and how election campaigns are funded. It will secure strong and effective representation for all Ontarians in the Legislature. It will set aside the guessing game of when elections will be held, put all parties and citizens on a level playing field and give Ontarians fairer elections. The bill, if passed, will provide Ontarians with the real-time public disclosure of political donations that they deserve and will significantly advance political finance reform in Ontario.

This bill is about working together—working with the people of Ontario, for Ontario, to build a stronger democracy. That means working together to renew and revitalize the role of citizens in our province's democracy. It means working together to retain the best of our parliamentary traditions while reflecting 21st-century realities and values and to boldly recast the relationship between Ontarians, their provincial government and their Legislature in a more positive and productive light than ever before.

As the minister responsible for democratic renewal, I am very proud to stand in support of this bill, and I urge all members of this House to join me in doing the same.

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It's an absolute pleasure and honour to take part in the debate on second reading of Bill 176, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, to repeal the Representation Act, 1996 and to enact the Representation Act, 2005.

First of all, I want to thank the minister responsible for democratic renewal, who happens to be the Attorney General of this province as well, for bringing this bill forward.

As the parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for democratic renewal, it's my pleasure to rise today in support of Bill 176. This bill is an important step forward toward renewing public faith in government and democracy. If passed, Bill 176 will allow us to use the permanent register of electors to convene a citizens' assembly on electoral reform and a citizens' jury on political finance reform.

**1610**

The citizens' assembly would look at how Ontarians elect their provincial Parliament representatives, recommend the best electoral system for Ontario, and, if a change is recommended, put that change to the people of Ontario in a referendum.

The citizens' jury would review political finance and campaign finance issues, such as contribution and expense limits during election and non-election periods.

These changes, if passed, will aim to reduce the influence of money in politics.

This bill also addresses an issue that has received support from members of all parties on both sides of this House; namely, preserving 11 northern ridings to ensure a strong voice for northern Ontarians. This bill, if passed, would de-link Ontario's northern ridings from the recent federal redistribution and maintain the existing boundaries, therefore maintaining 11 northern representatives in this Legislature.

We have also included fixed election dates in this bill, an issue that has already been discussed in this chamber.

Finally, this bill takes action on the issue of publicly disclosing political donations. If passed, it would make real-time reporting on the Internet a reality. This will allow the public to track contributions on the Internet.

Bill 176 builds on the government's ambitious democratic renewal agenda, an agenda on which we have already made significant progress: We have extended the powers of the Auditor General to conduct value-for-money audits of public sector institutions; we have banned partisan advertising; we have required that cabinet ministers must attend question period at least two thirds of the time; and we have mandated the Auditor General to independently review the state of Ontario's finances before provincial elections. Now, through these measures, we are inviting Ontarians to actively participate in making important choices on fundamental issues of governance.

The McGuinty government is strengthening Ontario's democracy by improving the quality of our democracy and modernizing our political institutions. With this bill, our government is aiming to give the people of Ontario a stronger voice on issues that matter to them and stronger representation in this Legislature.

I'm honoured to stand in support of this legislation, and I request members on both sides of the House to fully support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Joseph N. Tascona):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** This bill shouldn't be talking about democratic reform or called democratic reform. What it should be entitled is: the gerrymandering of electoral districts for the province of Ontario. I will explain that later.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I'm going to have an opportunity to speak more fully to this bill a little later on, but I have to say that there are some details that were not discussed by the members of the government who have opened the debate this afternoon. I look forward to spending some time wading through some of those details to bring to light what some of the problems are that we see with this particular bill. Whether that's to do with fixed election dates, with fundraising, or with who has the power to control, appoint or, indeed, receive information from the citizens' assembly, all of those issues are things that we need to get into and to discuss, because while the government likes to throw out these comments about how helpful, how democratic and how

wonderful all of these initiatives are, we need to spend some time not only reviewing what's occurred in other jurisdictions that we can, and should, actually be learning from—instead of recreating the wheel—but also bringing to light some of the problems that are still apparent and that need to be addressed.

Of course, after this second reading debate, I'm sure we'll be dealing with some of these things in more detail in committee, but I do want to start raising some of them this afternoon, and maybe a couple of my colleagues will have the opportunity to do so as well, just depending on the length of time that the opposition takes in its leadoff speech.

So thank you for that opportunity. I look forward to debating this bill in a little bit more detail later on this afternoon.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Indeed, I'm delighted to hear the opening comments of both the Attorney General and the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale with regard to Bill 176.

I see this as a real opportunity for empowerment for the citizens of Ontario. I think this is a major step. You know, you talk to many people. You talk to them about why the participation rate has declined in elections, not only provincially, but federally and municipally, and they're looking for an opportunity to explore new ideas.

There are examples such as Australia and New Zealand where they have perhaps the best of the first-past-the-post system and a modified proportional representation system to elect their members. Indeed, the citizens' jury will have an opportunity to look at many of these ideas that for far too long have been debated in academic circles throughout Canada. There have been a number of reports written on changing the electoral system in this nation, and they've collected dust for many, many years. This will be an opportunity for citizens to review a lot of those documents and have a real, thorough discussion.

I've read a couple of articles with regard to the British Columbia experience. As a matter of fact, they're having an election right now. They are the first province, I believe, in Canada to have a fixed election date, and also on the ballot, I believe, they will be looking at the recommendations that came from the citizens' jury in British Columbia.

Anything we can do—and this goes for members on all sides—for the opportunity to re-engage the citizens of Ontario in the political process will be a helpful vehicle. I'm also pleased that we're going to take the time to have a better reporting procedure for donations, politically. I think, again, that'll strengthen the democratic system in Ontario.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs (Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge):** I'm pleased to take a couple of moments to comment on Bill 176.

I was pleased a number of months ago, under private members' public business, to be able to bring forward a resolution on democratic renewal. We had an hour of some very interesting debate. Certainly the opposition expressed its views on the matter. I was pleased to have



the support of the Legislature on that particular resolution.

Having come from a municipal background of a number of years, fixed election dates sure make a lot of sense to the public. They know exactly what to expect. Having gone through some six or eight months of hide-and-seek, peekaboo election times last spring, I was tiring, as were the campaign volunteers and the constituents: "When are we going to have this provincial election?" Quite frankly, they couldn't wait to see the back side of the former Premier and much of his caucus, although some members of the caucus returned and they even added one or two new members, as the case might be.

It took a long time to get there during last spring, but certainly on a go-forward basis, when this legislation gets passed, the public will know exactly when it is that elections are going to happen. When we start knocking on their doors, they will know we're serious about an election, rather than knocking on their doors trying to get their attention. They will ask, "Oh, gee, is there an election?" We had to tell them, "We're not sure. We're waiting for the Premier to figure out when he thinks it might be to his advantage to call an election." By the time we were there the third time, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing, visiting that often, and we still weren't sure about an election, they even began to question our credibility in being there suggesting that there might be an election some day.

There are a number of matters in this legislation, whether it's fixed election dates, some transparency on election financing and/or the boundary adjustments to secure the northern Ontario representation. We heard discussion today about ensuring rural communities are well represented, and this is going to help achieve that.

1620

**The Acting Speaker:** In response, the Chair recognizes the Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Bryant:** I want to thank the members from Peterborough, Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge, Hamilton East, and Lanark–Carleton for their comments.

I was surprised to hear the member from Lanark–Carleton say what he did in this sense: Number one, he introduced a private member's bill calling for fixed election dates on the very date we have here, so I would have thought he would have supported that. I know his party had no commitment to campaign finance reform, certainly not during the last election or otherwise. We do. Maybe he does. We'll hear about that.

On the 11 ridings in the north, and the changes to the southern ridings, what people need to understand is that all the ridings in southern Ontario were determined by an independent commission, for which Elections Canada was responsible. There is no question that this was an independent process, and it wasn't either the federal or the provincial government determining that.

As for the 11 ridings in the north, I have two things to say. First, it was the same 11 ridings as were contested in the last election, with the same boundaries as in the last

election. We're not touching them. Who were those boundaries determined by? This government? No, they were determined under the previous government by Elections Ontario. They had an independent commission to set the riding boundaries for those. Maybe what the member is getting at is that he's opposed to having appropriate representation for the people of northern Ontario, and if you want to know why they don't have a single Conservative MPP in northern Ontario, it's because of that attitude. If you want to know why they couldn't even hold on to Mike Harris's old seat, it's because of that attitude.

I say this is good for democracy, this is good for the electoral system, and I'm sure I'm going to eventually convince the member to support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Sterling:** I agree with the government and with the public that we need democratic reform in this province. I think we need it in this country. I think our institution, the Legislature, the Parliament of Ontario, has degenerated over the last 10 or 15 years, where debate in this place—I am not even sure that whether I stand up and debate on this bill matters very much any more. I am pretty pessimistic about the fact that the government hasn't listened with regard to any of the opposition's arguments over the last year and a half, enough to amend any bill in any kind of significant way. I don't even know if they've done it even in a minor way. We have a government that promised during the election that they would have free votes. We saw the first free vote yesterday, a year and a half after they've been in power, and it was on a very narrow issue, where three local members were forced to vote against their own government because of the mistreatment of the city of Brampton in a bill.

There can be no doubt in my mind that it is time to look at democratic renewal for the Legislature of Ontario, but I want to compare this government's approach to the approach of their cousins in Ottawa. It may be the fact that the Liberals in Ottawa are in a minority situation that they had to be more sensitive to the House of Commons than this piece of legislation is to the Legislature of Ontario.

Quite frankly, I'm a little chagrined that there are not more members in the Legislature interested in this topic or in this area, because it can affect our province very dramatically as we go forward. Be that as it may, I think it's important to look at what the federal government did with regard to this. They essentially followed the kind of path I would have followed had I been in the position of the Attorney General or in the position of trying to change this place to be more positive and to come out at the end with something the people would support to a greater degree.

At the federal level, the minister responsible for democratic reform is a fellow from Ottawa as well, Mauril Bélanger, a Liberal from the eastern part of the Ottawa–Vanier area with whom I have worked on many co-operative fronts, particularly the Ottawa Congress Centre, to

enhance our city of Ottawa. Mr. Bélanger and the federal Liberals set up a select committee way back in November and asked members of Parliament to participate in going forward with their democratic renewal proposals. I think it's really important that the federal members of Parliament, the people who have the experience with the process, are engaged in what happens.

I have no objection to setting up a citizens' committee and having that kind of input into what kind of changes we might want to make to this institution of Parliament, but I believe that the sitting members, and quite frankly some of the former members, should have the opportunity to put forward their experiences to try to make this a better place as we go into the future. While these reforms, I would say, go around the edge of real reform, they are important. Some of the proposals or possible changes are important to where we go forward.

One of my federal members, Scott Reid, of the Conservative Party, has visited other jurisdictions that have proportional representation models. The committee of the federal Parliament went to New Zealand. They were able to talk with the parliamentarians there. In some ways, in talking with Mr. Reid a week ago in my constituency office about his particular visit, he convinced me to some degree that we should look very seriously at the model New Zealand has.

When we are talking about changing the direction, the history of a body like this that has been in place now for 140 or 150 years, then I really believe the approach to this should be measured, should be as careful as it possibly can be, before we come to a solution that may or may not work in the end. I really believe that the creation of a standing committee should be done even at this stage of the game. It doesn't require a piece of legislation to do that, and I invite the government and the government members to encourage the Attorney General to take that step.

1630

The other part of this government saying they are in favour of democratic reform may be taken, or some people may take it, with a grain of salt. I hope that members here have read the *Globe and Mail's* editorials for the previous three days—yesterday, going back three days—where they discuss some of the notions of democratic reform mostly in the federal context, but they do relate very, very strongly to our institution as well. They believe very much that the federal Liberal Party does not have, really, a great drive to change, for instance, the first-past-the-post system. That's what the *Globe* believes in their editorial and what they state in their editorial.

I must admit some skepticism with regard to this government's drive toward democratic reform, because their record really has been abysmal to date in terms of them working within the present rule and the present institution and showing that they are inviting the opposition members to play a constructive role here. It has been very, very difficult to sit in opposition when you know that what you say in debate doesn't really matter,

that what you propose in committee doesn't really matter, and when they close down their own members with regard to a free vote, when in fact they promised to do that in the election.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Déjà vu all over again.

**Mr. Sterling:** It may be déjà vu all over again, but hopefully—and I say this to the whip, whom I've got a lot of time for—you can't go forward, you can't convince the public that we're going to change unless we have leaders and leaders' offices who are strong enough to say, "We will face the press. We will say, 'We are going to allow a free vote here.'" We may take some criticism from the press that we're not all together and that there's a lack of discipline—that's what the media sometimes do to us in terms of exercising free votes—but you have to have that kind of leadership. The public are waiting for something to happen in our institution of Parliament, and it's not happening yet.

So in terms of the reforms that they've brought forward so far, some of them, quite frankly, are kind of phoney: the one about the cabinet ministers having to be here two thirds of the time. The Premier supposedly keeps an attendance record and he's going to charge them \$500. We all know that nobody is ever going to get charged the 500 bucks unless the Premier says you can be away—I don't know whether it requires a note from their parents or whatever it is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Sterling:** Oh, you've got to get a note from the whip. But anyway, these kinds of shenanigans with regard to these things are quite—now, the fixed election date: I don't have a problem with fixing the election date. The only problem I have is that under our British parliamentary system and our Constitution, you can't do it. So effectively, that October 4 date doesn't put any real onus on the Premier to have the election on that date. I think it is a pretty strong promise, and I think the Premier would be in a pretty difficult situation if he didn't have the election on October 4, 2007, and I expect the election to be then. But the fact of the matter is that the Premier could walk down the hall today, because we already passed this particular law. This is déjà vu all over again. We did away with the old act and we're doing it over again. I think we are adding one little kink to it, that the election writ period will be 28 days on a constant basis.

But there are instances in our system where we might want to have an election more than once every four years. If, for instance, God forbid, after an election in a majority government, or in any kind of government, the Premier died or was incapacitated, I think the public might expect that, in our politics in particular, where a whole lot of people make the decision on who's the leader, the public might not want to support another party member being the Premier of the province for three years after such an occasion would occur. That is a pretty extreme example, but it does point to the fact that there are instances where, in fact, there might be an argument that you would want an election.



This bill covers several areas. One of the areas that it covers is election finances, and I'm going to defer part of my remarks to my friend Mr. Arnott, who has brought forward a private member's bill on financial disclosure, because I think he's got a much better idea than is contained in this bill.

One of the things that I wanted to talk about—and I don't think people realize what this bill does. It takes away a certain process in our election process. It takes away the right of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission to set our borders, and that's kind of interesting.

I want to read to you from some remarks of Mauril Bélanger, who is, as I mentioned before, the minister responsible for democratic reform for the federal Liberals. He spoke at my alma mater, the University of Ottawa, on February 16, and was talking about some of our history. I want to refer to page 3 of 8. You can get this particular speech, I say to all members, off the Web site that the government of Canada has, under democratic renewal. He's talking about the history of the change in our democratic institutions and that there have been changes over a period of time. He says, "I don't have time to review all this history in detail, but let me cite a few key examples of how our democratic institutions have evolved over the past 40 years."

His first example of how our system has become better is an independent, non-partisan process established for drawing electoral boundaries. This act does away with that process. What this act does is set the electoral boundaries for the benefit of the provincial Liberal Party in an upcoming provincial election. It gerrymanders the boundaries in the north.

There was quite a bit of concern over the federal boundaries commission with regard to northern boundaries. In fact, there were many MPs who sat in that area who complained about the fact that they were taking the federal northern ridings from 11 to nine. That was the first recommendation of the federal boundaries commission, and the reason that happened was that the population of the north has stayed stagnant or has in fact decreased. There are about 850,000 people who live in the north. Meanwhile, areas like the greater Toronto area, Brampton, Vaughan and Ottawa have exploded in their population. The average riding size now at the federal level, the 106 ridings, is about 107,000 in population in each of those ridings. So when you divide 107 into the 850, you have trouble coming within the range of 25%, plus or minus, in creating more than nine ridings. After the hearings they had, the final report of the commission came up with 10 ridings in the north. They somewhat agreed that they should not have nine, but they would go for 10.

1640

If you read their report, which again is on the Web, it's pretty hard to argue against the conclusions they stated, after considering that the people from the north wanted more ridings. They wanted 11 ridings. I understand why any area doesn't want to lose representation. One of the new ridings that I have in the area that I represent, at the Lanark end, goes all the way from

Carleton Place to Napanee, which is a huge, huge area to cover for an MP or an MPP. That area is much larger than some of the northern ridings that have much less population.

Anyway, some of the remarks that were made by the electoral commission completely refute the notion that these larger ridings are needed in northern Ontario, because some of them are quite small in geographic area. It's very difficult for a politician here standing and saying, "Look, we want to win ridings in the north, so we're going to promise them 11 ridings." Well, let's promise them 12, let's promise them 15. What's the difference, if you want to buy their votes, with all that? But we have a problem here. We have an act at the federal level which says, plus or minus 25%, they allow the electoral boundaries commission to operate within that. In certain cases, they will allow an individual riding to even go outside of the 25%, as they have in the riding in the very far area of Rainy River, where the riding goes down by, I think, 45% from the average—just for that one riding in northern Ontario. That brings all of the rest within 25%, for the remaining nine ridings.

The other part that the provincial Liberals have a problem with here is this: They own seven of these ridings up north at the present time. The NDP owns three, but they're not the proponents of this bill, so I can't say to them that they're gerrymandering in the north.

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot):** What do you guys own?

**Mr. Sterling:** We have one in the north.

I don't think any politician in this Legislature would deny or back away from—if given the choice, who would you rather represent? I'd rather represent the people I represented in the last four years, because they know me, they know the work I've done, and my chances of getting re-elected by the people who know me against a stranger are greater than if I'm given a new riding.

Guess what? In the north, we're going to have seven Liberal incumbents who are running in exactly the same boundaries as they did last year. With deference to the Attorney General, who says that these ridings were set by the electoral boundaries commission, they were, on the basis of the 1991 census, some 15 or 16 years ago. That particular electoral boundaries commission was not dealing with the huge populations that we now have and the huge growth we've had in southern Ontario.

There's another problem that they actually have as well, and that is that it's not only the laws of Ontario that guide our election process. Our Constitution, under section 3, has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of Canada to say that you can't give more electoral power to one segment of our population than others. Therefore, I believe that this particular bill, with regard to northern Ontario, could be attacked in court.

I think that when you look at the numbers, as I have, with regard to northern Ontario, you have areas—Timiskaming–Cochrane is 34.45% below the average. The average across Ontario is 107,000. If you look at Algoma–Manitoulin, it's 31% below the average. If you

look at Sudbury, it's 25.6%—close. If you look at Sault Ste. Marie, it's 30% below the average. But the trouble with Sault Ste. Marie is that it only covers 247 square kilometres. There are about 30 or 40 ridings in southern Ontario that have 30,000 or 40,000 more electors in a larger geographical area.

Having read some of the law with regard to the amount of latitude the Ontario Electoral Boundaries Commission has, I'm very, very suspicious that if this bill passes, a citizen from southern Ontario or a class action from southern Ontario could go to the courts and say, "I am not being given my fair voting power because of what the government has done with regard to gerrymandering the boundaries in the north."

I will refer to a case from a provincial electoral district distribution in Saskatchewan, where the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that one of the conditions for effective representation was relative parity of voting power: "A system which dilutes one citizen's vote unduly as compared with another citizen's vote runs the risk of providing inadequate representation to the citizen whose vote is diluted. The legislative power of the citizen whose vote is diluted will be reduced, as may be access to and assistance from his or her representative. The result will be uneven and unfair representation."

Justice McLachlin did note that factors like geography, community history, community interest and minority representation may need to be taken into account to ensure that our Legislative Assemblies effectively represent the diversity of our social mosaic. But we have in place, up until this particular act came forward, that we were in accordance with the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, where the province is divided into the number of ridings to establish the election quotient, which I said was 107,000 people, and riding population is to fall within 25% of that quotient, except in extreme circumstances. I said that in the Rainy River area they have that one extreme circumstance. All the other federal ridings, the other 105 of them, fall within the 25% quotient.

The problem with this proposal is that only one riding in the north falls within the 25% quotient. For instance, in the north you're going to have an average of 76,000 electors for each of their ridings, while in the south, it would be 110,000 for each of the ridings. There is quite a difference in the amount of impact that an individual's vote has in both of the areas.

I understand the dilemma that the Liberals are in, because basically they went up north in an election and said, "We're going to keep 11 ridings here, come hell or high water." Well, I guess they have two choices here. They could strike an electoral boundaries commission and change all of the south, create more ridings, and then they could bring those figures down to be within 25%. I say to them that I'm not necessarily against 11 ridings in the north. I'm just saying that if you're going to have 11 ridings in the north, you're probably going to have to have, not 96, but 105, or maybe even 110, in the south.

You can't have it both ways in this. You've got to come within section 3 of our charter. You've got to be fair with the people of the province of Ontario. I would also say that you are going a step backwards by setting electoral boundaries not as the result of the commission but as the result of a political promise. You are setting the boundaries in the north on the basis of your wishes and not as the result of an electoral boundaries commission. You're going back a step in democratic renewal, democratic reform. You're in reverse on that particular matter.

#### 1650

I don't think most people realize that this bill does away with an automatic readjustment after every 10 years, which is what we had when we latched on to the federal legislation.

I can point out many of the inequities that are there. Let me take, for instance, the riding of Nipissing, which is around North Bay. This riding is 8,383 square kilometres. This riding is about 1,300 square kilometres smaller than the Lanark—Renfrew—Lennox and Addington riding, which will include some of the area that I represent. This is a riding that goes all the way from Carleton Place, which is just west of Ottawa, down to Napanee. This riding is about 9,600 square kilometres. The people in Lanark—Renfrew—Lennox and Addington are going to have 38,000 more people in that area than in the smaller area. How can you say to the people of southern Ontario in that riding, "Even though you are from a very, very large geographical area, you don't have the same political punch as the people in the north"? Well, I know why: because the Liberals are gerrymandering that riding. They have a Liberal there, and they want to keep exactly the same boundaries so that Liberal will have an advantage in the next election over whomever the candidates are who challenge the incumbent.

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** What would it take to get an advantage in Lanark—Carleton?

**Mr. Sterling:** Well, you'd have to be a very sterling character. It's worked eight times.

Now, let me talk about another riding. Sault Ste. Marie is 247 square kilometres. It's roughly comparable to the size of the new riding of Vaughan, which is about 230 square kilometres, and the Whitby—Oshawa riding, which is about 234 square kilometres. The representative in Sault Ste. Marie will be representing 74,500 people, whereas the people who are representing Vaughan and Whitby—Oshawa will be representing more than 112,000 people, and both of those ridings are growing very rapidly.

So you have a situation which is impossible to defend. My view is that should a resident of southern Ontario take this piece of legislation to the courts, there may be a very valid constitutional challenge with regard to his or her right for equality under our charter, section 3, in terms of the equal voting impact they are guaranteed in that particular section.



"Gerrymandering," according to the Oxford dictionary, is "to manipulate the boundaries of a constituency so as to give undue influence to some party or class." This is giving undue influence to the Liberal Party of Ontario, as they own seven seats in the north at the present time and want their incumbents to run in the same boundaries they did before, while everybody in southern Ontario is going to have to readjust to new boundaries. They're going to have to take in new constituents, people who don't know them, so they will not have the advantage of incumbency, as they will in the north.

I think they've got a real problem with regard to that. I think this bill creates a real problem in that there's no automatic review of riding boundaries, as there was in the Representation Act, 1996, which this repeals. So this is a step back in terms of democratic reform or renewal.

These arguments are hard to put, because I know the people in the north would love to have 11 representatives. They'd probably love to have 21 representatives, or whatever, because the more representatives you have, the more access you have; the more opportunity for them to represent the people in the Legislature of Ontario. But you've got to follow our Constitution and our charter in terms of what you do.

I mentioned before the citizens' jury, which I don't have a big problem with. The only problem I have with the citizens' jury is that they may come up with a result like they did in British Columbia. The big problem you have with citizens' juries is that sometimes they are captured by one or two individuals, which I believe was the case in British Columbia, where an academic, or a number of academics, captured the citizens' jury and put forward an unbelievably complicated system of electing MPPs. I believe they're going to have a referendum on that in the next election. I suspect that no one in British Columbia, save the people who were sitting on the citizens' jury and had hours and hours to study and look at this, understands their very complicated system.

I am not putting aside the idea that we should have a good look, at least, at some kind of proportional representation, but I do believe that the democratically elected MPPs should have a role in this. They should have a role in saying to the appointed body that is created in this legislation what their terms of reference are, what their mandate is and what we are going to do with the result when we get it back. I think the Legislative Assembly should have some say in that. I would do as your federal Liberal cousins have done in Ottawa; I would create a select committee of this Legislature to look at other jurisdictions and talk to other politicians about how their new electoral system works.

I'm not sure, however, that changing how we are elected to this place is actually going to make this place any better. I think the dynamics of this place would be changed if we had perpetual minority governments, which proportional systems tend toward. If you read the *Globe and Mail* from yesterday, they are betwixt and between. They want the opportunity to have a majority government but, on the other hand, they like the notion of

proportional representation, because they see the injustices that occur with regard to the fact that you can get a majority government in Ontario with 37%. I think Bob Rae had 37%; I think a few others have had that amount as well.

What needs to be looked at, over and above this: If you really do want to change the way we interact and act within this Legislature, we should sit down and talk about fiscal control and the power of the Senate. I have been in cabinet for about 12 of the 28 years that I've been here, I've been a backbencher for about four and I've been in opposition for the other time. I know from all of those positions of the power at the centre. And it isn't just the Premier; it's the people around the Premier who have huge power. Quite frankly, some of those people around the Premier are wet behind the ears. Some of them don't have a lot of experience in life. Some of them don't know what they're talking about. There has to be a way of breaking that lock on control or sharing some of that power out and away from the Senate. It's just not healthy for our system. We are left with a system where those who sit with the governing party are told in the morning what the line is to parrot today, and off they go and spin, spin, spin, whatever they are told to say for the rest of the day. That's it; that's their participation in this process. There's no opportunity for innovation; there's no opportunity for constructive participation by either the backbench or the opposition in where we're going to go in this province.

#### 1700

In terms of setting down a standing committee for democratic reform, we should talk about how we in the Legislature can share in the fiscal decisions of the government of Ontario, how each one of us would prioritize the expenditures of the government of Ontario, how each one of us would tack in order to get that money. There has to be a sharing of that. One of the problems you have—it's not a problem, I guess, when you get into opposition, but I can say just about anything in terms of, "You're not doing enough here; you're not doing enough there." When I say, "Please give me \$5 million to do a hospital in my area," I don't have to say, "Will you chop the \$5 million off somebody else?" So I don't have any financial responsibility in terms of what I say.

But when I was a minister and I had to go to my cabinet colleagues and say, "I need such and such money"—when I was the Attorney General and I said I needed \$36 million for some new judges so that we could catch up with the backlog, I had to be conscious, and my cabinet colleagues had to be conscious, of where that money was going to come from. Were we going to go into debt? Were we going to chop it off of somebody else? So there is no downside over here to saying, "I want more," and there is no downside to not acting in a responsible manner in terms of what we expect in terms of the public.

My view is that we should use this opportunity. You can do whatever you want in this particular bill. The bill, save and except for the election boundaries, is not that

dangerous. It doesn't really do that much. But we should really look at a mechanism whereby the government of the day throws some of its fiscal power either into the backbench or into the opposition or whatever. Some may say that that is somewhat mirroring the American system of government. I say, so be it, if that's what we need to do in order to get some kind of better balance within this place, so that we can all be constructive in trying to meet the priorities of the people of Ontario.

This bill could have been so much better. If the government had created a select committee and had taken a report from a select committee and worked with that, they could have really taken this province forward.

One of the great parts in politics is election day and election night. I think that's the time when you have the most fun. The most fun that you have is getting here. Once you get here and you start to take on the responsibilities that you have to, then some of the fun subsides. I think that this bill on democratic reform is more about the fun side. It's about the election process and whether or not we should have proportional representation, which means that if you win 5% of the vote, you get a certain break, and all the rest. But the truth of the matter is, it's more important to figure out how this place operates, how the fiscal-financial system works in the province and in our country, than how you get here.

We have a really big problem in gaining the respect of our citizens. I don't think our citizens think that the people here are really trying to govern in their best interests, and that's because the system is very adversarial. We stand up in the House each day and say, "You did this," and they stand up and say, "You did that." They say, "We're great and you're bad," and we say the opposite. That's fun for a little while, but after a while, I think everybody just turns off the TV and goes back. We've got to change the system where the people in this place are all involved in the decisions. Unless you do that, you're going to push yourself into a minority situation. You're going to have minority governments forever. And once you get into minority governments—I have sat in three of them, and I can tell you, as a backbencher, they're more fun. You're more involved. They have to rely on you more than they do now, and what you say does count to some degree, but there are times when a majority government is necessary as well.

At this point in time, I'm going to yield to my friend Mr. Arnott, who wants to talk about election reform with regard to finances.

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the gallery, we have the Shanghai Foreign Language School, being hosted by St. Aloysius Gonzaga school in Mississauga and their teacher, Mark Boguski. I'd just like the House to recognize them here on their visit to Ontario and Canada. They will be leaving Ontario and moving on to Vancouver.

Thank you very much for joining us today.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member from Waterloo-Wellington.

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** The member for Lanark-Carleton is indeed a man of Sterling character, as he pointed out to us earlier—he is quite right about that—and we're very fortunate to have the dean of our caucus imparting his wisdom upon the House this afternoon on this important issue.

I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak somewhat briefly on this. I just wanted to talk about a private member's bill that I have before the House, Bill 180, which is very germane to this issue. My bill is called An Act to amend the Election Finances Act to require publication of contributions. This comes back to the discussion that took place in this House, I guess it was earlier this year, in March, when it came to light that two of the most significant and senior members of the government, the Premier and the Minister of Finance, were present at a fundraiser in, I think it was May 2004, where they asked property developers to spend \$10,000 for a ticket and come to this fundraiser held at a private residence, even at the same time as the government was considering its greenbelt policy. Unfortunately for the government, this particular fundraiser, which I'm sure they had hoped would be kept secret over time, came to light. One of the people who attended talked to some of the media and informed the general public through the media and through the opposition parties that this had taken place.

This raised very serious questions that were asked in this place by members of the opposition and members of the media about the integrity of the government. The government seemed to be quite dismissive of it initially and quite offended that we would ask these questions, but I'm sure if they were on the other side, they would conclude that this just did not pass the smell test.

That leads us back to today. Certainly, the government had been committed to bringing forward what they called real-time disclosure of campaign contributions—I believe they committed to that in their campaign platform, if I'm not mistaken—and almost 18 months had passed and nothing had been done. So in an opportunity that I had in question period, I raised this with the Minister of Finance and asked him when he was going to bring in this legislation. He was extremely irritated by my question and quite indignant. I suggested in my supplementary that I could probably get a private member's bill scratched together within hours, if need be, to call upon the government to do this, and I signalled my desire to do this.

1710

I guess it was the next Monday after my question that the government brought forward this bill. I'm not sure if my question lit a fire under the government. I would hope that from time to time they listen to the opposition, and perhaps it did encourage them to get going on it, I don't know, but what I would suggest is that their bill is deficient in terms of the election finance reforms they brought forward if they are really committed to what they call real-time disclosure. It is my understanding that their bill in terms of real-time disclosure is not real time at all.



The bill would require the donation of \$100 or more to a political party—and this is important: not a riding association, but a political party—to be filed within five days with Ontario's chief elections officer, and then in another five days posted on the Internet for all to see. So this is 10 days, not what I would call real time.

My bill would call upon any significant donation to a political party or a riding association—this includes riding associations—which I would consider to be any donation over \$100, to be disclosed on a party Web site the day the cheques are cashed. I believe it's doable. I believe the provincial government should work, through the chief elections officer, to develop the software that would make this easy for the riding associations to do.

The government has argued that riding associations should be excluded from the legislation because they are run by volunteers and can't be expected to do the paperwork. I completely disagree with that. The riding associations have to be run by very competent people in terms of the administration of the donations, because there's an election finances law currently that they have to adhere to. At the end of the year, when the donations have been tabulated and reported to the chief elections officer, Elections Ontario, receipts have to be issued. You have to have competent people as CFOs of riding associations and campaigns. I believe that if the software were made simple enough, it would make the task very easy for the CFO of a riding association.

I would also suggest that if the riding associations are excluded from the legislation, an unscrupulous person who is trying to buy the favour of the government might very well make a significant number of donations to riding associations through numbered companies.

This is something that Murray Campbell, in a column in the *Globe and Mail* on March 8, alluded to as well and I'll very quickly read it to you, if any of the members on the government side are interested:

"Mr. Bryant's bill contains an enormous loophole in that donations to individual constituency associations are not covered. He defends this by saying that the volunteers at the local level couldn't handle the demands of near-instantaneous reporting, but the exclusion opens the potential for abuse.

"The maximum allowable donation to a political party is \$8,400 a year and while it's true that the maximum to a riding association is just \$1,120, an individual or company can make five such donations for a total of \$5,600. This money can then be passed on to the central party," which could happen.

"Imagine myriad numbered companies making \$5,600 gifts and you get an idea of the magnitude of donations that could be hidden. Robert MacDermid of York University, who studies political giving, estimates that 25% to 30% of the money flowing to the Liberals and the Conservatives in the past decade came through constituency associations."

Clearly, there is the potential here for a huge loophole that the government perhaps is deliberately trying to maintain—perhaps has overlooked—I don't know, but

certainly I would encourage them to take a look at my Bill 180. I'm under no illusions they're going to call it for second and third reading. But at the same time, I believe private member's bills are an important vehicle for members, such as me, to bring forward ideas in the Legislature in a meaningful way, put our name on the bill and say, "This is my position," and advocate for it. That's what I've tried to do on a number of issues, as members will know.

I would ask the government to at least take a good, hard look at this. I would respectfully request of the minister, if he's not prepared to amend the bill to reflect the principle of my Bill 180, I would ask him for an answer as to why he won't, because I think it's important that people who are concerned about this issue have some better understanding of the justification of the government's bill.

I look forward to the further discussion that will take place on this piece of legislation. Again, I ask the government to give serious consideration to my Bill 180 in that process.

#### **The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Horwath:** It's my pleasure to make comments on the leadoff speech by the member for Lanark—Carleton, as well as the comments from the member for Waterloo—Wellington. I have to say first off that a great deal of knowledge was brought forward by both of these members, one through the vast experience he has had in this place, and then another from the experience of preparing a bill to address some of the parts that are contained in Bill 176.

I think it's fair to say that people in Ontario and people in Canada—as a matter of fact, people across the world—are worried about the governments they elect and whether or not they actually represent the will of the people who are going to the polls to vote in any particular election. So you have a number of different jurisdictions across Canada and worldwide that are looking to electoral reform or democratic renewal or whatever words you want to use to describe a review and rejigging of the way in which democracies are elected or built in these communities.

I have to say there are many pieces to this legislation that at the outset look fairly benign, but when you really examine the effect—one example that was raised was around election finances and the idea that this piece of legislation is going to deal with real-time disclosure. When you look at the details, you find that not only does it not reflect real time, but in fact not all donations are going to have to be reported. That is silly business. That is the kind of stuff people in Ontario are sick and tired of, and unfortunately this government is intent on feeding them more of this nonsense.

**Mr. McMeekin:** There are few people in this Legislative Assembly who are held in higher esteem than the member from Lanark—Carleton and the member from Waterloo—Wellington, and it was so refreshing to hear them make some helpful comments. I'm waiting in breathless anticipation to get this into committee so that

we can digest some of those ideas, and hopefully practise part of what we preach here about listening and making this place work better and what have you.

So I'm optimistic, although somebody once said, "If you are going to borrow money, borrow it from a pessimist because they won't expect to have it paid back." I don't want to sound too optimistic, because while I'm an idealist, I don't have any illusions.

That said, I want to focus for just a minute or so on a concern I had as I was listening. Sometimes you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. We went to the people in the last election and talked about the north and the importance of regionalism and recognizing that larger ridings may need to have some advantage around representation, because it is about access, as the member for Lanark-Carleton said. I don't know, if you listened to the member, you would almost get the feeling that he was about to launch a legal assault against the people of the north. I don't think that's where it's at. I think the folk in the north understood what we were saying, and so did the other people of Ontario, and they embraced it.

We're trying to be held to account every day for promises. If we had not proceeded with this, there would have been members opposite saying, "There you go, another broken promise."

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** We talk about amendments and things in committee, and of all the legislation that we've passed in this House and that has come before committees in this House over the last 20 months of this government, but not one amendment from any opposition member has been passed. I don't know what never-never land you live in out there, but there might be something in the water out there.

This whole bill is the start of a disturbing trend to me. This gerrymandering of seats that the member for Lanark-Carleton talked about is a very significant situation. He used a number of examples; he didn't use the example of my riding of Halton. In my riding of Halton—in the new riding of Halton—there will be about 130,000 in population there, based on the 1999 census, plus all of the people who have moved in since. It's one of the fastest-growing areas in all of Canada.

1720

There is a riding up north that has 65,000 people in it. That's half. A vote in my riding of Halton will be worth only half of what it is in another riding in Ontario. I don't care if it's up north or down south or out east or out west. It's not fair that some people's votes are worth one and other people's votes are worth a half. That's a very dangerous trend, to start moving down a road in that particular direction.

Sitting in the House—the proportional representation argument: I haven't seen a situation around the world where proportional representation only lets in people who have stood before the electorate and won an election in their riding. To me, there is something wrong when somebody can sit in this House without having gone before the people and won an election with the majority

of votes. I think that's a problem, and I think the direction you are going in is dangerous down the road. The people's representation—and I will get on to them in the next two minutes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I'm pleased to respond to the comments made by the member for Lanark-Carleton, Mr. Sterling, as well as those made by Mr. Arnott. New Democrats have been very clear about the need for the north to have strong representation. New Democrats are very concerned about the prospect of the number of representatives from northern Ontario being reduced. However—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kormos:** Look, don't shoot the messenger. I find the observations made by Mr. Sterling to be in and of themselves troublesome because it's, in fact, the case. We've got a problem here. New Democrats will be adamant that there should be the maintenance of 11 representatives from northern Ontario. New Democrats will be adamant that this government had better address flaws in this legislation that may well cause the whole electoral mapping purported to be adopted by this legislation thrown into turmoil, should it not be effectively charter-proof or charter-responsive. New Democrats say that the government had better look very, very carefully at this. Don't deal with the argument by dismissing it or by belittling the spokesperson putting forward the argument or by minimalizing it. It's got to be dealt with.

My other concern is that this particular issue may not see adequate committee time for it to be the subject of commentary by the expertise that's undoubtedly available out there, whether it's the Osgoode law school type of expertise or the other academics or people from any number of chief electoral offices and their respective officers. I look forward to that taking place.

I'm going to be having an opportunity in two minutes' time to make my contribution to this debate. I look forward to that in two minutes' time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mr. Sterling:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the most important thing with regard to the boundary issue is the abandonment in this legislation of a process which can sustain us into the future, a process where the boundaries are not set upon the political whim of one party or the other.

This piece of legislation wipes out the boundaries commission, and it says that if we're in government next, then all we do is bring in a piece of legislation and say, "We want to draw the boundaries this way," or if the NDP gets into power next, they could draw the boundaries and say, "We just drew them this way." That's basically the problem with this legislation. You are abandoning one of the most important democratic reforms to occur in this province and in this country over the last 20 or 30 years. You're doing away with independent boundary commissions. I can't be in favour of that. I believe it should not be done by one political party, the majority party. It should be done by an independent commission that has to sit down, work according to rules and justify



its decisions. That's what happens at the federal level. Sometimes they have to give out hard decisions, but when you abandon that, you're gerrymandering. You can't get away from the fact that you're drawing some of those lines to your benefit.

That's what's happening here. We have a bill that does away with one of the most important parts of democratic reform and gerrymanders the northern ridings in favour of the Liberal Party of Ontario. I'm sorry, but that's what this bill does.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Kormos:** I'm pleased to be able to participate. I'm asking at this time for unanimous consent to hold down the lead comments by our critic, Ms. Churley, the member from Toronto-Danforth, who can't be here today.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** For one sessional day?

**Mr. Kormos:** For the purpose of this search for unanimous consent to the next day of debate. If need be, I'll be calling for it again. But I anticipate that the next day of debate, we'll do that one step at a time. Incrementalism will prevail.

**The Acting Speaker:** With that understood, is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** The spirit of co-operation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member from Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** Clearly, there are four parts to the bill. I want to make it very clear that New Democrats are adamant that the north needs, more now than ever, clearly—you've got cabinet ministers in this government who shrug at the plight of northern Ontario. You've got an electricity policy that has put northern Ontario into an economic tailspin, and you have a government that appears to have no regard for the incredibly important role that northern Ontario and northerners, people in those northern communities, very small and bigger, play in this province.

However, we share the concerns around the validity of the remaining ridings in the context of the 11 northern ridings and the disproportionality among them, and very much want the government to investigate this matter, discuss it candidly and address it with a view to ensuring adequate northern representation, but ensuring at the same time that that adequate northern representation, 11 seats, is going to be secure and not the subject of litigation or constitutional challenges, as suggested may well be the case by the member from Lanark-Carleton.

The aspect of the bill that purports—and I say “purports”—to create fixed election dates is one that's incredibly troublesome to me, because I don't believe the bill creates fixed election dates, and the government is not being very forthcoming when it somehow says that it does. Look, we have a fixed election date in the province now: It's that a Parliament can't function for more than five years. All this bill does is say that a Parliament can't function for more than four years, so it doesn't change the rules at all. It purports to create a fixed election date

some day in October—October 4—but look at what will become section 9 of the Election Act, should this bill pass. The section is titled “Four-Year Terms” because, really, that's all it is; four-year terms in contrast to the five-year terms that we have now. “Nothing in this section affects the powers of the Lieutenant Governor, including the power to dissolve the Legislature, by proclamation in Her Majesty's name, when the Lieutenant Governor sees fit.”

Now, we know that the Lieutenant Governor, in the year 2005, here in the province of Ontario or in Canada doesn't run around dissolving Parliaments at whim. What this means is that a government can surrender its mandate, can resign at any time it wants. It can go to the Lieutenant Governor and say, “That's it. We're asking you to dissolve Parliament and call an election.” That's what happens now.

1730

Nothing in this bill says that a government can't be defeated in a non-confidence motion, because subsection 9(1) says, “Nothing in this section affects the powers of the Lieutenant Governor, including the power to dissolve the Legislature....” So in the event of a non-confidence motion, the Premier goes to the Lieutenant Governor and says, “Dissolve Parliament; drop the writ.” That means that an election is called within 30-some days from that point in time.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** Twenty-eight.

**Mr. Kormos:** Twenty-eight days. I'm sorry. That's an amendment as well.

So there you are. It is a myth to suggest that this bill creates fixed four-year terms, republican-style. It is a myth to suggest that this bill creates a fixed election date of October 4 in any year, never mind every four years. What it does do is reduce the term of a government to a maximum of four years from the existing maximum of five years.

That takes me to the point where I say: What's the bill addressing? What issue, what problem is the bill addressing? What concern is the bill addressing? I think that the remarkable distinction of the British parliamentary system versus the true fixed dates of the republican system is incredibly valuable.

A government in the British parliamentary system can go to the people if it feels it has to have its mandate renewed by the people. It doesn't have the lame duck quality of an American government that, for instance, has a Senate and a Congress that are dominated by a political party that isn't the political party of the President. That's a horrible position to be in. When you've got domination of a Parliament by political representatives who aren't of the political party of the government, the government can be defeated, as it should be. Then you go back to the people.

I've been here long enough to witness what happens—the peril. I've seen these two things; both things. I've seen the incredible risk that a government takes when it calls an election too early. I saw that in 1990, when there was a rush to an election by the then Liberal government.

Of course, we all know what happened. The Liberal government that had a huge majority in 1987 lost not just the huge majority but was defeated miserably in that 1990 election. There are no two ways about it: People were not pleased that the government called the election as early as it did. That certainly was a factor. There were a whole pile of factors, but that certainly was a factor.

I've also seen governments that have tried to cling on—as a matter of fact, the next one—beyond all hope, hoping against hope that somehow the economic tide was going to turn. Similarly, the voters of the province want nothing to do with a government—

**Mr. Arthurs:** It was 1995.

**Mr. Kormos:** You're darned right; I was there. They want nothing to do with a government that tries to hang on beyond the natural scope of its mandate.

This doesn't create fixed election dates, nor does it create four-year terms, but there are going to be some government members standing up and saying that the bill does. I don't know where that passion comes from to create fixed four-year terms, even though the bill doesn't create fixed four-year terms.

I need for the Attorney General or his parliamentary assistant, both very capable people, to address this issue in a very frank way, not only for the purpose of New Democrats but for the purpose of his own backbenchers as well, because the marketing of this was, "Oh, this creates fixed election dates: October 4"—not September 4, not November 4, but October 4—"and it creates four-year terms," when, in fact, the bill itself says that's hogwash.

Please, take a look. Take a look at the bill, because it very specifically, in statute, preserves the power of the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislature, and that means the power of the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislature when a Premier or a government at whim, at any time, calls upon the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the Legislature, or when they do it as a result of a non-confidence vote or motion.

Ms. Horwath, what's going on here? Is this David Copperfield, a little razzle-dazzle while something's going on over there, a little misdirection? Because it certainly isn't fixed election dates. What it does do, and this is of great concern to me, is it reduces the maximum term from five years down to four years. That's what it does, so let's have that debate. Tell me why the maximum should be five years rather than four years. Because when the maximum is five years—let's take a look at it historically—that turns naturally into four years and a few months, by and large, if you take a look, which will be the natural term of most provincial governments. Does four years turn it into three years and a few months?

Is there the suggestion that somehow the government, any government, won't be able to manipulate the election day in its favour? Horse feathers. Read the bill, because a government, even if this bill is passed, can go to the Lieutenant Governor and say, "Dissolve Parliament, dissolve the Legislature and drop the writ" after one year,

after two years, after three years, to seize on a politically convenient election date, any day other than October 4. So it's a very peculiar sort of thing here.

I don't think the people of Ontario like being flimflammed, yet what we've got here is a bill that says one thing while its sponsor, the Attorney General, says another. Yet at the end of the day, it's not the words of the Attorney General that are going to become law, it's the letter of the law that is going to prevail.

So I ask all our members to take a good, close look at that. At the end of the day, all this does is reduce the maximum term from five years to four years. It doesn't create a fixed election date. It doesn't create a fixed four-year term. That leaves me with wanting very much to hear the argument for reducing the maximum parliamentary term from five to four years.

I want to talk about election finance, partisan finance, party finance, disclosure, because, boy—and the member for Hamilton East, who is sitting here with me, Ms. Horwath, remembers question period after question period when the New Democrats were challenging the government to come clean, because they promised, didn't they, Ms. Horwath?

**Ms. Horwath:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Kormos:** Sorry, Ms. Horwath, I didn't hear you.

**Ms. Horwath:** Absolutely. Broken promises.

**Mr. Kormos:** Thank you, Ms. Horwath. The Liberals promised. Didn't they promise, Ms. Horwath?

**Ms. Horwath:** They did. They promised.

**Mr. Kormos:** The Liberals promised. It was a promise, wasn't it, Ms. Horwath?

**Ms. Horwath:** Definitely.

**Mr. Kormos:** That they were going to introduce real-time disclosure. Now, am I right on that, Ms. Horwath?

**Ms. Horwath:** You're absolutely right, Mr. Kormos.

**Mr. Kormos:** Yet it was like doing dental work. You saw the pained look on the Premier's face or the Attorney General's face—you wanted to call for a nurse to please administer some Novocaine—when in question period after question period, these guys were being drilled front and centre on—well, it all came out in the open when we had the secret little tête-à-tête over the high-priced, solid oak dinner table in some gated mansion up in the Woodbridge area with the Porsches and the Bentleys and the Jaguars and the Mercedes-Benzes being parked by the service staff. Think about it. While the \$10,000-a-pop developers, by invitation only—10 grand, 10,000 bucks; that's a pretty big pile of hundred-dollar bills. We don't have thousand-dollar bills any more. That's a pretty big pile of hundred-dollar bills. You've got these developers getting out of their Maybachs. Have you ever seen one of those Maybachs, those big, new luxury cars? They're around \$400,000. They're the size of yachts. So you've got some big developer going up to this private, by-invitation-only Liberal soiree, tête-à-tête, with the Premier and with the Minister of Finance, and they've got a Loblaw's shopping bag with them to hold the money. You understand what I'm saying?



1740

**Ms. Horwath:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Kormos:** Well, not from Loblaws, because these people don't shop at Loblaws; maybe a Pusateri's shopping bag, up on Avenue Road, because when you're in the Maybach, Mercedes-Benz, Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Jaguar crowd, you shop at Pusateri's, which is a fine place to shop. I don't want anybody from Pusateri's mad at me, but it is a little rich, a little dear. So they got the Pusateri's—or maybe from Holt Renfrew. You know, "Hilary, could I have a few shopping bags? You don't mind, do you? Thank you very much, Hilary."

So you've got your Holt Renfrew shopping bag full of hundred-dollar bills, because that's what \$10,000 is, \$10,000 to sit down. And if you're a developer in the midst of the greenbelt—development: very important to developers. So the price of admission, the ticket, the price of the ride: \$10,000, a Holt Renfrew shopping bag of hundred-dollar bills. If it's not neatly stacked, you need two shopping bags. OK?

You get out of the back of the Mercedes-Benz after you pull up in the curved driveway in front of the huge mansion with the double-storey columns out front, the driver opens up the back door of the Mercedes and you get out there with your two Holt Renfrew shopping bags full of hundred-dollar bills and you sit down, and you've got to put the money on the table before there is any discussion. That's the price of admission—not a penny of it disclosed. Holy moly. We found out about it, the world found out about it, and we said, "Whoa!" The Liberals promised—yet another promise. How shocking that they would break yet another promise. Are you kidding? We weren't shocked at all. By then we had been so desensitized to broken Liberal promises that, you know, keeping a promise would be the exception rather than the rule—an exception we're still looking forward to, mind you.

So there we go: \$10,000 and not a penny of it disclosed. Who were the people? Who were they? What were their names? Why were they there? Ten grand a pop, the price of admission. The ticket to this movie is costing you, sir or madam, \$10,000. You got the ear of the Premier; you got the ear of the Minister of Finance, two of the province's most powerful elected officials. And you don't have their ear because you're just a plain old resident of Ontario. You've got their ear because you're a rich resident of Ontario, because you've got two Holt Renfrew shopping bags full of hundred-dollar bills, \$5,000 in one bag, \$5,000 in the other, which you've got to lay on that solid oak table before you sit on the velvet dining chair with the carved French Provincial arms to sit down and have your tête-à-tête with the Premier and the Minister of Finance.

So you've got a real need for a real-time disclosure. Now, what's remarkable is that the NDP introduced a bill, Bill 177, the very same day as the government finally got around to presenting their lacklustre, rather toothless bill, because as Mr. Arnott has already noted, the government Bill 176, the bill of the Attorney General, has a loophole so big you could drive that proverbial

Mack truck through it. You could drive one of those Euclid monsters, one of those Electrahauls—you know, where the tires are higher than my head? Have you ever seen one of those big mining trucks? That's one big truck, let me tell you. But this is one big loophole. It is a huge loophole, because the government says, "Oh well, our legislation will require real-time disclosure to a party. But oh, you can take money out of that slush fund and pump it into any Liberal riding association, so that it will flow up into head office in any event, and not a penny of it has to be disclosed." Tony Soprano himself could be making contributions, and we'd never know. Think about it. Because all Tony Soprano has to do is flow it through the constituency riding association.

Now, the government says, "Oh my, we can't expect riding associations to report \$500 contributions." Are you kidding? We work hard for the money we raise down where I come from. Ms. Horwath, I trust, is in the same situation. Trust me: If my riding treasurer got a cheque for \$500, she would be on the phone to everybody, because we raise money \$5, \$10 or \$20 at a time, but the Liberals are prepared to have shopping bags full of \$10,000 paid through riding associations. Not a penny of it has to be reported, nor does the identity of the donor have to be disclosed.

I regret that my time is up. I know Ms. Horwath has a lot to say about this bill, as do other New Democrats. This is an important debate. I have been able to deal with but three facets of this four-faceted bill. All four of those facets have some pretty distinct problems. I think it's incumbent upon all of us to make sure that the bill isn't just greased up and slid through like the proverbial lubricated pig, but rather receives the debate, attention, analysis and focus it deserves. The government's talking about making some pretty bizarre changes to some pretty important laws. I say to them that they'd better get it right, because it's going to have some impact for a good chunk of time to come.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham):** Bill 176 is an extremely important piece of legislation that the Attorney General has introduced, because this impacts on the future of Ontario and it certainly impacts on the well-being of all Ontario residents.

The member from Lanark-Carleton spoke at some length with respect to the representation of the north. He spoke about section 3 of the charter, the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada and so on. I think he's missing the point. The point is that representation is not exacting mathematics, nor is it a legal matter. This is a matter with respect to what is fair and appropriate. I think it is fair and appropriate. I'm happy the member from Niagara Centre agrees with us that we need the 11 ridings in the north to maintain a strong voice in that area. We've done the right thing, because we are not reducing the number of seats unnecessarily. We could have increased it from 11 to 12 or 13, but I think we've struck the right balance so that we will retain the 11 seats to let the north have a

strong voice. If there are additional changes that should be necessary, then that can be dealt with in due course.

I want to touch on the aspect of the citizens' jury and the citizens' assembly very quickly. This is also important, because I don't think the residents of Ontario are incompetent to deal with these matters and require the MPPs to do so. I think that in fact they would love to be part of the process. This is exactly why the Attorney General has allowed this to happen. Just to remind members here, of course these participants will be selected through a process that is non-partisan, open and transparent—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member from Halton.

**Mr. Chudleigh:** The member from Niagara Centre always speaks eloquently on these matters, especially on legal matters. I believe he's a lawyer. Are you a lawyer, Peter? Did you ever actually practise? He's a lawyer, but he never actually practised. Did you? His clients aren't sure if he's a lawyer either. He's talking about the fixed election dates this bill brings in. I think it's just going to fix elections. I think they forgot about the dates part, the gerrymandering of seats up north and across Ontario, possibly sitting in this House without being elected from a riding.

This whole bill is supposed to be done in the interest of reinvigorating voter interest in the process to raise the level of voter participation. You're not going to do that with confusion. You're not going to do that with gerrymandering. You're not going to do that with free entry into the House without being elected. How you're going to accomplish that is by providing integrity in government, providing honesty in government and providing respect for the acts in this place that we govern from. That's what will reinvigorate interest in our election process, not this bill before the House today.

1750

**Ms. Horwath:** It's my pleasure to comment on the remarks of my colleague from Niagara Centre, a great community that I had the pleasure of visiting not too long ago. Boy, when he talks about the real people in Ontario, the real people who can't afford \$10,000-a-plate dinners, I met some of them there and they are a wonderful group of people. I have some friends who live in that riding as well, in the area of Thorold. The meeting I went to I think was in Welland, as a matter of fact.

Nonetheless, I have to say that one of the things the member from Niagara Centre was very clear about is this government's refusal to address one of the fundamental problems in Ontario in regard to how they raise money and how they are claiming they want this disclosure to occur, but when you look at the bill, it doesn't accomplish that.

One of the things the member from Niagara Centre talked about was who was at that dinner and how much you had to have to be there and what it is you were buying once you got there, and that is the ear of the Premier and the finance minister. But guess who couldn't go to that dinner? The kids with autism in this province,

whose families can't get a fair shake out of this government, who can't get IBI treatment for their children. That's who wasn't at that dinner. The other people who weren't at that dinner were the people who are getting their national child benefits clawed back every month to a tune of a couple of thousand dollars a year per family. Those people, who need the national child benefit money the most, weren't at that dinner, because of course they can't afford \$10,000 a plate. Workers who want a fair shake on Bill 144 weren't there. They can't afford two shopping bags, whether they're Gucci bags or Holt Renfrew or whatever they are. They can't afford those dinners. Stelco pensioners, Steelworkers who are worried about their jobs, they weren't there either.

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** I have to say that I'm a new politician, I'm new at this business or game or whatever you want to call it. Maybe I was a little bit idealistic. I thought, I'm going to take a turn at public service, try to make things a little bit better.

**Mr. Leal:** We're glad you're here.

**Ms. Mossop:** Thank you. Maybe I'll end up with a flatter forehead at the end of all this, but maybe I'll actually make a contribution and do something.

One of the things that's happened since I've become a politician is I occasionally get phone calls or e-mails from upset people and they say, "You guys are all the same." Suddenly I'm "you guys," and they're not talking about me or Liberals. They're talking about "you guys" and "you guys" and all of "us guys," if you don't mind me butchering the language, everybody of every political stripe in the political arena.

When I listen to some of the rhetoric and some of what we call professional wrestling, perhaps, that goes on in this place, we don't do ourselves any service. We're actually our own worst enemies in this regard because we are duking it out, and maybe sometimes not being completely fair in some of our accusations and conversation. So we don't do ourselves a very great service in some of this. There's some cynicism out there—a lot of cynicism out there. As I say, we are our own worst enemy sometimes.

This bill is going to try to address that in a number of ways. We're going to try to make not just a collective image, but to get people involved in this discussion, essentially get "you guys" out there on the other side of the camera involved in a conversation about how to make the democratic process better. The democratic process is still the best thing we've got on the planet. If you don't believe me, you can drop into some other countries around the world where they operate under other political regimes that you might not wish to take part in.

So we're going to talk to "you guys" out there in a citizens' assembly, a citizens' jury, to help us make these processes—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. In response, the Chair recognizes the member from Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Kormos:** I thought I was only going to deal with three of the four elements of the bill. These citizens' juries—the Reform-Alliance party movement has finally



found some company, some sisterhood and brotherhood in the Liberals here at Queen's Park.

Look, New Democrats have been clear. We were clear in the last provincial election. We believe in proportional representation. That's what we advocate. That's what we announced as part of our platform. We think it's a fairer way to elect people. We think it's a better way to run Parliaments. We think it's a more effective way to make governments work and to make every voter's vote count.

So what's this with citizens' juries? Is this a high-priced focus group? Is this a group that's going to be manipulated in terms of the input that's given to them so that they come up with the answers the government wants? Why aren't politicians prepared to stand up on principle, on the basis of what they advocated and what they stand for as members of a political party and when they run a campaign to get elected, and engage in the debate?

What's this with passing the buck? This is democracy. Make it work. Don't pass the buck off to citizens' so-called juries. Take the bull by the horns, and cut out some of the bull in the process, but take the bull by the horns right here in this chamber and put forward a proposition. You're either for proportional representation or you're not. If you're for it, stand up and say so. Don't go out and do polling and decide, "Oh, we'll take a position that happens to be popular at the moment," because that position may not be popular the next moment. Heck, a year ago, the Liberals federally were popular. They are not very popular now, after Gomery and all those revelations of all the theft and the money taking place and flowing to Quebec. Look what happens in the course of but 12 months, friends.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. It being close to 6 p.m., this House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie</b> (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)		Marsales, Judy (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N.</b> (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona</b> (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John</b> (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)		Milloy, John (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David</b> (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher</b> (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S.</b> (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Elgin-Middlesex-London	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve</b> (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation		Fonseca, Peter (L)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Peterson, Tim (L)
Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce</b> (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga-Sud	Delaney, Bob (L)
	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre		Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)
Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
		Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Stoney Creek Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh Sudbury	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L) Brownell, Jim (L)  <b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa–Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thornhill Thunder Bay–Atikokan Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior– Nord	Racco, Mario G. (L) Mauro, Bill (L) Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	McNeely, Phil (L) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford Parkdale–High Park	Hardeman, Ernie (PC) <b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)</b> Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto–Centre–Rosedale	Bisson, Gilles (ND)  <b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound–Muskoka Perth–Middlesex Peterborough Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge Prince Edward–Hastings Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Samia–Lambton Sault Ste. Marie Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre Scarborough East / Scarborough–Est	Miller, Norm (PC) Wilkinson, John (L) Leal, Jeff (L) Arthurs, Wayne (L) Parsons, Ernie (L) Yakabuski, John (PC) Di Cocco, Caroline (L) Oraziotti, David (L) Duguid, Brad (L)  <b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Toronto–Danforth Trinity–Spadina Vaughan–King–Aurora  Waterloo–Wellington  Whitby–Ajax Willowdale Windsor West / Windsor–Ouest	Churley, Marilyn (ND) Marchese, Rosario (ND) <b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b> Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances <b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Flaherty, Jim (PC) Zimmer, David (L) <b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement <b>Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L)</b> Speaker / Président Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Simcoe North / Simcoe–Nord Simcoe–Grey St. Catharines	Wilson, Jim (PC) <b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	York Centre / York–Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique	York North / York–Nord York South–Weston / York–Sud–Weston  York West / York–Ouest	Munro, Julia (PC) <b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

# CONTENTS

Thursday 5 May 2005

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### Ontario produce

Mrs. Van Bommel .....	6823, 6831
Mr. Hardeman .....	6824
Mr. Craitor .....	6826
Ms. Scott .....	6827
Mr. Bisson .....	6827
Ms. Mossop .....	6830
Mr. Bradley .....	6831
Agreed to .....	6839

### Healthy living

Mr. Kular .....	6831, 6839
Mr. Klees .....	6833
Mr. Bisson .....	6834
Mrs. Jeffrey .....	6836
Ms. Scott .....	6837
Mrs. Cansfield .....	6837
Mr. Arnott .....	6838
Mr. Ramal .....	6838
Agreed to .....	6839

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Agnes Jamieson Gallery

Ms. Scott .....	6840
-----------------	------

### Community colleges

Ms. Martel .....	6840
------------------	------

### Community-based mental health services

Mrs. Sandals .....	6840
--------------------	------

### David Weldon

Mr. Klees .....	6840
-----------------	------

### Midwifery

Mr. Zimmer .....	6841
------------------	------

### Fergus Brass Band

Mr. Arnott .....	6841
------------------	------

### Education Week

Ms. Broten .....	6841
Mr. McNeely .....	6842

### Student literacy

Mr. Wilkinson .....	6842
---------------------	------

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### Standing committee on general government

Mrs. Jeffrey .....	6842
Report adopted .....	6842

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### Mental Health Week

Mr. Smitherman .....	6844
Mrs. Witmer .....	6845
Ms. Martel .....	6846

## Drinking and driving

Mr. Takhar .....	6844
Mr. Wilson .....	6845

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Fiscal and economic policy

Mr. Tory .....	6850
Mr. McGuinty .....	6850
Mr. Sorbara .....	6850

### Child care

Mr. Hampton .....	6851
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6851

### Health care funding

Mr. Hampton .....	6852
Mr. Smitherman .....	6852

### Children's treatment centres

Mrs. Witmer .....	6853
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6853

### School closures

Mr. Marchese .....	6853
Mr. McGuinty .....	6853

### Small business

Mrs. Jeffrey .....	6854
Mr. Cordiano .....	6854

### Education funding

Mr. Klees .....	6854
Mr. McGuinty .....	6854

### Gambling

Ms. Horwath .....	6855
Mr. Cordiano .....	6855

### Affordable housing

Mr. Arthurs .....	6855
Mr. Caplan .....	6856

### Firefighters

Mr. Arnott .....	6856
Mr. Kwinter .....	6856

### Hydro rates

Mr. Hampton .....	6857
Mr. Duncan .....	6857

### Youth employment supports

Mr. Berardinetti .....	6857
Mrs. Chambers .....	6858

### Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund

Mr. Miller .....	6858
Mr. Caplan .....	6858

### Fuel distribution security deposit

Mr. Hampton .....	6859
Mr. Sorbara .....	6859

## PETITIONS

### Seniors' transit pass

Mr. Ruprecht .....	6859
--------------------	------

### Anti-smoking legislation

Ms. Horwath .....	6859, 6860
-------------------	------------

## Tenant protection

Mr. Ruprecht .....	6860
--------------------	------

## Credit Valley Hospital

Mr. Leal .....	6860
Mr. Levac .....	6861
Mr. Kular .....	6861
Mr. Peterson .....	6862

## GO Transit tunnel

Mr. Ruprecht .....	6861
--------------------	------

## SECOND READINGS

### Election Statute Law Amendment

<i>Act, 2005, Bill 176, Mr. Bryant</i>	
Mr. Bryant .....	6862, 6865
Mr. Kular .....	6863
Mr. Sterling .....	6864, 6865, 6872
Ms. Horwath .....	6864, 6871, 6876
Mr. Leal .....	6864
Mr. Arthurs .....	6864
Mr. Arnott .....	6870
Mr. McMeekin .....	6871
Mr. Chudleigh .....	6872, 6876
Mr. Kormos .....	6872, 6873, 6876
Mr. Wong .....	6875
Ms. Mossop .....	6876
Debate deemed adjourned .....	6877

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Speaker's ruling

The Speaker .....	6843
-------------------	------

### VE Day

Mr. McGuinty .....	6847
Mrs. Witmer .....	6848
Mr. Hampton .....	6849

### Business of the House

Mr. Caplan .....	6859
------------------	------

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 5 mai 2005

## AUTRES TRAVAUX

### Jour de la Victoire en Europe

M. McGuinty .....	6847
M <sup>me</sup> Witmer .....	6848
M. Hampton .....	6849

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

### Loi de 2005 modifiant des lois

<i>en ce qui concerne les élections,</i>	
<i>projet de loi 176, M. Bryant</i>	
Débat présumé ajourné .....	6877





No. 142A

N° 142A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 9 May 2005**

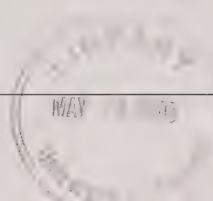
**Lundi 9 mai 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 9 May 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 9 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### NURSES

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It is my pleasure and privilege to rise today to pay respect to Nursing Week in Ontario. This morning I met with three very dedicated nurses from my riding of Durham who serve at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa. My constituent Kim Cearn, a registered nurse, is the policy and political action officer with the Durham-Northumberland chapter of the RNAO. Also in attendance were RNs Laurie Grills and Jackie Doiron. They are caring and professional nurses.

We also spoke about the vital role of nurses in the field of mental health services. Because of the stigma attached to mental illness, this is not always a very high-profile area; some would say it's the silent health issue. However, mental illness affects society at many levels, including the individuals who have been diagnosed, their friends, family and co-workers. One in four is directly affected. The nurses pointed out that four of five people in Ontario are affected at some level by mental illness.

Our meeting this morning was a reminder of the far-reaching impact of the work done by Ontario's nurses in all aspects of health and wellness. Citizens of Durham riding are proud of the care and professionalism shown daily by nurses in our communities across Ontario. They are trusted, vital professionals who are concerned about their patients.

These nurses work at Lakeridge Health, where the Ontario Ministry of Health is failing to fund mental health adequately.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS OF THUNDER BAY RESIDENTS

**Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I would like to announce today in the Ontario Legislature that the residents of my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan have great reason to celebrate the accomplishments of a few of its residents. Recently, not one but two significant athletic achievements were accomplished.

The first was by Hugh Dale-Harris, a 33-year-old Thunder Bay teacher and dogsledder, who on April 27, along with a team of explorers, mushed his way to reach

the North Pole in just 37 days, setting a world record by coming in several hours earlier than a disputed record set in 1909 by Robert Peary's expedition.

The team left Cape Columbia in northern Nunavut on March 21, hoping to retrace Peary's route to discover the North Pole. After reaching the pole, the explorers raised the Canadian, US, Nunavut, British and South African flags.

The second and no less glorious recent achievement was by the Thunder Bay Bombers men's senior hockey team. On April 24, ex-Lakehead University goaltender Cory McEachran backstopped the Thunder Bay Bombers in a 4-3 overtime win for the Allan Cup championship game over the Montmagny Sentinelles in Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. Derek Levanen scored the overtime goal. Other ex-Lakehead players included Jeff Adduono, Craig Priestley, Mike Jacobsen, Kevin Hoogsteen and Barry McKinlay. This achievement is made even more remarkable by the fact that just a few weeks earlier this team was not yet formed nor had a league to play in.

This is the ninth Allan Cup championship for Thunder Bay area hockey teams. Thunder Bay has enjoyed a long and glorious history of winning the cup, the most recent team being the Thunder Bay Twins in 1989.

To both Hugh Dale-Harris and his family and the Thunder Bay Bombers hockey team, I would like to recognize you today in this Legislature, and would add that the citizens of Thunder Bay also congratulate you for honouring your hometown.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I rise today to recognize the value and importance of small schools in Ontario. Last year, 44 schools in Ontario were closed by the McGuinty Liberal government. This June, 36 more schools are slated to close. There are at least 40 schools under review for closing, with more to be added by the end of May. These closings will affect a total of 69,949—70,000—students. How can this possibly serve to meet the needs of these students?

Today, the minister has received a letter from Sarah Doub, a very articulate grade 12 student at Glencoe District High School in London. This school has received an 87% success rate on the grade 10 literacy test—6% above the Thames Valley board average and 5% above the provincial average. Sarah's letter attests to the tremendous value provided by small schools, which give

support for every student and encourage active community engagement.

Small schools work. School boards need to be provided with a new funding formula that recognizes the value and importance of small schools. Many parents whose children attend small schools are anxiously waiting for you to keep your promise. It's time to change the Conservative funding formula.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** The generosity and benevolence of the Hamilton community knows no bounds. I rise today in the House to acknowledge that Hamilton Health Sciences has raised over \$71 million in funding from various donors across our great city.

One of our corporate leaders, Dofasco, who states, "Our product is steel, our strength is people and our home is Hamilton," has made the largest contribution yet to the hospital's campaign. We in Hamilton West would like to applaud Dofasco's donation of \$2.5 million that has been generously given so far to Hamilton's hospitals. We might add a fourth line to Dofasco's advertising, which might say, "Our character is our community."

The hospital community in Hamilton announced its campaign on April 13, 2005, with the goal of raising \$100 million from the community. The provincial government will raise that total to \$250 million.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the donors to Hamilton's medical community. I would like to thank the Ontario government for its commitment to improving our health care. Our community will be putting their funding to good use. Together, we can all make a difference.

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** On Friday, my office in Pembroke was visited by a group of school bus operators in Renfrew county. They are very upset with this Minister of Education, who has committed on a number of occasions to looking at, reviewing, adjusting and changing this funding formula that would respect what is happening in rural Ontario with regard to school transportation.

With gasoline and insurance costs escalating far faster than any of their incomes are going up, they simply have their backs to the wall. As a matter of fact, transportation committee chairman Norm Hazelwood has as much as said that this is a crisis situation that must be addressed by the Minister of Education. They are among the lowest-paid and oldest fleets in the province.

1340

Mr. Speaker, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Education on December 10, imploring him to get involved in this because it was reaching a crisis situation. Do you know what the response was? Nothing. Absolutely nothing; no reply. I wrote again on April 20; no reply. But I'm not surprised, because each of these operators

has also told me that the minister has not responded to their letters at all.

The minister has been bragging about achieving peace in the classroom, and I commend him for doing so. However, if you have no children in the classroom, it's not too hard to have peace. If we don't do something about school transportation in rural Ontario, that is exactly what we will have: no one to get our children to and from school safely.

### HOCKEY

**Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre):** Last week in front of this Legislative Building, the London members—Chris Bentley, Khalil Ramal, Steve Peters, John Wilkinson and myself—challenged the Ottawa members—Premier Dalton McGuinty, Richard Patten, Jim Watson, Madeleine Meilleur, Phil McNeely and, no stranger to hockey, Jean-Marc Lalonde—on who is going to win the championship of the Ontario Hockey League.

We're putting up London's favourite product, Labatt beer; they're putting up Ottawa's favourite product, the legendary beaver tails. You see, the London Knights are challenging the Ottawa 67's for the OHL championship. This is sure to be a great series. Both teams are fighting hard, and the series is tied at one apiece.

The London Knights have captured the hearts of the city of London. They've rejuvenated the downtown core and set the city ablaze in an unbelievable year. The Knights have had an impressive season by anyone's standards. They set a record of 31 consecutive games without a loss. They finished first in the league in total points, total wins, most goals for, fewest goals against. They swept the Windsor playoff series and the Guelph playoff series. They continued their domination over Kitchener in the last round, and they are going to wipe the floor with Ottawa.

I am very proud to stand behind the London Knights, not only for their amazing regular season and their outstanding playoff performance, but also for their outreach to the community and to the province. I want to congratulate the players, coaches, trainers and support staff for this tremendous accomplishment. Soon we will have the league championship; then on to the Memorial Cup. Go, Knights, go. I can't wait to taste those beaver tails.

### FABRY DISEASE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I rise today to share with members of this House an e-mail from Darren Nesbit, a desperate 28-year-old Fabry patient from Sarnia who is being denied treatment by this Liberal government.

Darren writes, "Hi. It's Darren Nesbit, just writing to let you know I haven't had a treatment in a month and three days. My body needs treatment now; my kidneys, head and stomach hurt. I have no energy in my body to



do any normal things in life. Does anyone there know how this must feel for us?

"I have been in contact with the drug company, the hospital" and the health ministry. "They all have the same answer for me: Sorry, we can't help you live! My question is this: If Canada is a great country with a health care system, why do 40 different countries around the world pay for treatment for their Fabry's patients and we don't here?"

He ends by saying, "Please help us to continue to live. This issue is not about the Liberals, PC or NDP; it's about humans helping other humans to live. That's what I thought it was to be Canadian!"

Minister Smitherman, listen to the desperate pleas of Darren Nesbit, Rick Sgroi, Bill Taylor, Carolyn Auger, Julia Strauss and others. I beseech you, Minister: Show compassion and provide permanent funding for enzyme replacement therapy, as do 40 other countries around the world.

#### VETERANS

**Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** Yesterday was a day of great significance, not just for those living in Ontario, but for citizens of all nations. While VE Day celebrates victory in Europe, what it symbolizes is the victory of freedom over tyranny and the great sacrifices that were paid to make that victory possible.

The SD&G Highlanders, headquartered in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, played a significant role in this great conflict. They left the safety of their homes in Canada to fight for a cause they knew to be just. One of their accomplishments was the liberation of the Dutch town of Zutphen. Eleven members of the regiment paid the ultimate price to free this town. In a ceremony that the Highlanders attended this past week in Holland, the people of Zutphen named 10 streets and one bridge in a new subdivision in remembrance of these men.

The people of Holland have never forgotten the lengths our brave soldiers were willing to go in defence of their freedom. They continue to teach their children about the role Canadians played in the liberation of their country. They continue to honour the men and women who travelled so far and risked so much for complete strangers, because the idea of standing by while others suffered was unthinkable to them.

As the Dutch continue to honour our veterans, so must we remember their sacrifices and recognize that our freedom was built on the foundation of their actions. Nor can we forget what made these sacrifices necessary. We must tell our children about the horrors that can happen when hatred is made an institution. We must join with our brothers and sisters the world over and swear that we will never allow such atrocities to happen again.

In this Year of the Veteran, there is no greater tribute we can pay our veterans than to preserve and promote the peace for which they fought.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Could I have a bit of quiet, please? I'm not able to hear the statements.

#### NURSES

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** Today I'd like to take the opportunity to recognize one of the most honourable professions in our province. As you know, this week is Nursing Week and I'd like to highlight some of the achievements our government is making to strengthen the nursing profession around the province.

This government has created 3,052 new full-time nursing positions. In my riding alone, we've invested \$1.37 million at Sunnybrook and Women's hospital, which has created 22 new full-time nursing positions. When we passed Bill 8, legislation that the Conservative Party and John Tory did not support, our government installed accountability agreements that will ensure the protection of nursing jobs in a way that's never been done before.

We've also invested \$60 million for 11,000 bed lifts in hospitals and long-term-care homes to improve the working conditions for nurses. We've directed hospitals to make significant progress toward a 70% full-time nursing percentage. We've provided \$34.8 million to create graduate nursing positions, mentoring relationships, a late-career nursing strategy and to provide clinical simulation equipment. We're doubling the number of education spaces for nurse practitioners, from 75 to 150.

But there's something we're not doing. We're not comparing nurses to Hula Hoops. That is what the previous government did while they fired thousands of nurses at a cost of \$400 million and then spent hundreds of millions more in a vain attempt to hire them back. We're treating nurses with the respect and dignity they deserve, and we'll continue to ensure that Ontarians receive the highest quality of health care in Canada.

#### BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a copy of an order in council appointing Elizabeth Witmer, MPP, as a commissioner to the Board of Internal Economy, appointed by the caucus of the official opposition, in the place of John R. Baird, MPP.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Todd Decker):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 164, An Act to rename and amend the Tobacco Control Act, 1994, repeal the Smoking in the Workplace Act and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 164, Loi visant à modifier le titre et la teneur de la Loi de 1994 sur la réglementation de l'usage du tabac, à abroger la Loi limitant l'usage du tabac dans les lieux de travail et à apporter des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. till 9:30 p.m. on Monday, May 9, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, please say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Dunlop, Garfield	Peters, Steve
Arthurs, Wayne	Flaherty, Jim	Phillips, Gerry
Baird, John R.	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Hardeman, Ernie	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Ramsay, David
Bountrogianini, Marie	Klees, Frank	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldeep	Runciman, Robert W.
Broten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Scott, Laurie
Bryant, Michael	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Takhar, Harinder S.
Cordiano, Joseph	McGuinty, Dalton	Tory, John
Craitor, Kim	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Witmer, Elizabeth
Di Cocco, Caroline	O'Toole, John	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard	

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Howarth, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	Yakubuski, John
Kormos, Peter	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

### POLITIQUES FISCALES FÉDÉRALES-PROVINCIALES

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I rise to inform this House and the people of Ontario of developments in Ontario's campaign for fairness, our campaign to narrow the \$23-billion gap.

This weekend, I met with the Prime Minister. Working together, we succeeded in making what I believe is some real progress for Ontarians. Clearly there is more to be done. Unfairness remains in some key areas, and our campaign will continue. But let me take a moment to detail what we accomplished this weekend and what it means, most importantly, for the people of Ontario.

It means new hope for new Canadians, who will now get more of the support they need, from the settlement services they need at first to the job training they need to help our economy finish in first place.

#### 1400

It means stronger supports for unemployed workers who want to upgrade their skills. It means a more efficient, effective system of tax collection for Ontario businesses.

It means additional funds for post-secondary education and recognition of the importance of higher education in Ontario and Canada.

And it means a fairer deal for Ontarians when it comes to infrastructure. In other words, Ontario just got stronger, and that means Canada just got better.

I want to thank the Prime Minister in particular for working with me on two specific areas: immigration and labour. For at least the past decade, Ontario governments of various stripes have tried to ensure fairness for Ontario by seeking a new immigration funding arrangement and a new labour market development agreement with the federal government. Unfairness for Ontarians when it came to immigration funding had been in place since 1990. Unfairness for Ontarians when it comes to training funding had been in place since 1995. What previous governments have sought, this weekend we have achieved.

On immigration, we have reached a breakthrough agreement on settlement, language training and employment assistance for immigrants, an agreement that will see funding for these services in Ontario double next year and quadruple over five years. Under this agreement,



average annual spending on settlement services in Ontario will rise from \$819 to approximately \$3,400 per immigrant. This goes a long way toward addressing the unfairness that had seen our province receive 57% of new immigrants but only 34% of national funding. It also achieves what amounts to parity with our neighbours in Quebec, which receives \$3,806 per immigrant, the difference being accounted for in how Quebec assumes responsibility for administrative costs, whereas in Ontario the federal government will continue to assume that responsibility.

On job training, a new labour market development agreement, to be concluded within 30 days, includes a rise in funding for the training of unemployed people in Ontario, an increase that brings us for the first time to the national average.

To streamline the tax system for business, we have achieved agreement to create a single administration of corporate income tax in Ontario at the federal level.

On higher education the agreement provides \$1.55 billion over the next five years.

Mais ce qui est le plus important, c'est que le gouvernement fédéral a finalement accepté notre argument qu'en principe, l'Ontario devrait recevoir une portion per capita de tout nouveau financement alloué à l'éducation postsecondaire.

What is most significant is the fact that the federal government has finally agreed with our contention that as a matter of fundamental principle, Ontario should receive a per capita share of all new funding for post-secondary education. This is a big step toward fairness.

On infrastructure, we received a recognition that Ontario has fallen behind when it comes to funding, and a commitment for \$300 million in infrastructure funding over the final three years of this agreement.

Taken in total, this is progress we can all be proud of. But more work, as I said earlier, remains to be done, which is why I am pleased that the Prime Minister has agreed that the two of us will meet again to discuss what has come to be known as the \$23-billion gap.

I am particularly interested, for example, in addressing the lack of movement when it comes to Canada health transfers to Ontario. Whereas the other provinces continue to receive \$941 per person for CHT and CST, Ontario only receives \$857 per person. This difference translates into a shortfall of over \$1 billion for Ontario. Just as we worked with all parties in this House on this non-partisan issue of fairness, we are willing to work with the various parties in the House of Commons. I will be meeting with the Leader of the Opposition and will be happy to meet with the leader of the federal NDP, should he request such a meeting.

I'm proud of what we have achieved and how we have achieved it. I don't want to enlarge our success this weekend beyond what it is, but neither should we minimize it. We have made real progress. We have taken the first step. After the first step comes a second step; after the second step comes a third step and so on. What Ontarians are counting on is progress, and there's no doubt

about it: We are making real progress. We have approached this issue in the best tradition of our province by making a case based on the facts, founded in fairness, respectful of our history and devoid of histrionics.

I'm proud most of all of how Ontarians continue to work together as one on this issue. I want to thank the leaders of the opposition and the members opposite for supporting an all-party resolution on this issue. I can tell you that having that support behind me made a big difference. The unity that started here has extended to every corner of our province. Our campaign has been endorsed by the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Hospital Association, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the Council of Ontario Universities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, to name just a few. Our numbers have been backed up by leading economists, including studies from the TD Bank and CIBC World Markets.

Nous avons fait des progrès parce que nous avons parlé d'une voix unie. Nous allons continuer de faire des progrès si nous continuons à agir de cette façon.

We've made progress because we have spoken as one. We will continue to make progress if we continue to speak as one.

There's one more thing I want to say, because it bears repeating. Ontarians are proud Canadians. No one identifies more closely with a nation as a whole than do the people of this province.

We have been commissioned by history to play a leading role in Confederation, to help ensure fairness from coast to coast to coast, and we will continue to play that role. But to share wealth, we must be able to create it in the first place, and the best way to do that in the knowledge-based economy of this century is to invest in our people.

There's more work to do to narrow the gap further so we can help our people go farther. I'm not satisfied but I am pleased—pleased to report that we've made real progress, pleased because Ontario just got a little bit stronger, and that means our country did too.

## NURSES

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** That's what I call a tough act to follow.

I rise in my place today to remind my colleagues in this House that today marks the start of National Nursing Week. It is an opportunity for us all to reflect on and to give thanks for the extraordinary contribution that nurses make in our society. It's something that I and others have said many times, but it always bears repeating: Nurses are the heart and soul of health care. They are often the people with whom we have first contact when we have a health problem. They are very often the people with whom we have the most contact when receiving treatment for that problem. Nurses do a job that is frequently hard, usually stressful and always demanding. They do it

with a compassion and a grace that are a credit to them and to their profession.

Our government shares a vision with Ontarians of a health care system that will help people stay healthier, give them great care when they get sick and be there for their children and grandchildren. I can tell you that nurses have a critical role to play in our plan to make that vision a reality. Quite simply, we cannot do it without them. Not only that; we need more of them, and more nurses are precisely what we have begun to deliver. In all, last year we funded 3,052 new full-time nursing positions in our hospitals, in our long-term-care homes and in home and community care. Already 2,402 of these have been created, with another 650 funded and in the process of being created. We have also invested heavily in better education and professional opportunities for our nurses, as well as safer working conditions.

**1410**

We are making this province the best place in Canada in which to work as a nurse, from mentorship programs to initiatives to provide late-career nurses with less physically demanding roles to keep them working longer; from investing \$10 million a year for continuing education programs which will ensure that nurses will have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a very, very demanding profession to another \$10 million over four years to the nursing faculty fund to ensure we have the educators to impart that knowledge and those skills; from investing \$60 million for bed lifts in all our hospitals and long-term-care homes to more than \$11 million on safer needles and medical equipment—all to reduce the risk of on-the-job injuries. In short, we're working very hard to make the lives of nurses better and the jobs of nurses safer and more satisfying.

We are also working very hard to bring nurses more fully into our health care system to make the best use of their skills, their knowledge and their dedication. The 55 family health teams we announced last month are a prime example of how we're doing that, while at the same time increasing access to nurses and doctors. These family health teams, as we call them, are going to deliver better care in better ways to more Ontarians.

By bringing doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners together, along with pharmacists, dieticians and other health care providers, these teams are going to be able to provide the very best in comprehensive primary care. They will be able to care for more patients than any solo doctor's practice ever could, specifically because nurses and nurse practitioners will be on hand to work alongside doctors, providing complementary skills to ensure that patients receive great care when and where they need it. I consider this to be one of the very best ways to use the knowledge and skills our nurses have to offer, and we're doing it initially with 55 teams in 47 communities. There will be 150 family health teams by 2007-08.

As we mark National Nursing Week, I should note that nursing has been a profession in Ontario for more than 100 years; 101, to be exact. They are now into their second century. I'd like to say, on behalf our govern-

ment, that I expect it to be a century in which nurses don't have to fight quite so hard and quite so often for the recognition and respect they deserve. Certainly they're not going to have to as long as we're on this side of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Responses?

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm pleased to rise today to respond to the Premier's statement. I think everybody in the House will welcome more money coming to Ontario for the matters the Premier discussed: post-secondary education, immigrant settlement, skills training and so on. I think it's critical that we have the necessary funding to ensure that new immigrants are welcomed to Ontario and that their road to full partnership in the Ontario economy happens as quickly as possible. Similarly, I think we all agree that improved funding for post-secondary education is critical for the future of our province. I sincerely hope the improvements will be investments we can see actually being made and that we'll be able to quantify the benefits received.

That's the good news. I think there are some things that are a bit more disappointing.

First—and this underlines the point we have been making for weeks, if not months—the fact that we went into the meeting with numbers that perhaps were not the result of as careful thought as there might have been probably caused the Premier to come out with less than if he'd entered the meeting, as we suggested, with a specific list of individual inequities that required addressing.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The Leader of the Opposition and members of the opposition gave careful consideration and listened in silence. I would expect the same respect to be given to the Leader of the Opposition as he continues his reply.

**Mr. Tory:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To some extent, I think the result, which is well less than the \$5-billion down payment the Premier talked about without any reference to a five-year term, is as a result of the Premier not really having a plan over the past few months and not doing a better job in advance of the meeting.

We could have seen a list of items where there is inequity. This could have been shared with the public, with the media and with the opposition parties, among others, and I think could have contributed to a more focused, more broadly supported agenda that the Premier could have carried with him into the room.

We're left today with the somewhat sketchy list of details the Premier has outlined, combined with some curious words from the Prime Minister about how just about all of this money was included in their existing plans and budgets anyway, thus causing one to wonder what actually happened over the nine hours.



I also note with interest the apparent lack of any discussion between the Premier and the Prime Minister or any real initiative by the Premier of Ontario, as chair of the federation as well, to commence any kind of process to look for longer-term solutions. While I know that you, Premier, and the Prime Minister both said there will be other meetings to follow—in fact, you mentioned that today—I really feel that we urgently have to go to work on finding a better way to address these issues in the longer term.

It just doesn't seem right that months after the Premier signed a deal in effect causing us to automatically pay more for equalization, he should be put in the position where he's having to go to Ottawa to plead for money, and this in the wake of deals that are done elsewhere in the country. I'm sure the Prime Minister can't think that that's the right way to run the country in the long term, and as Premier of Ontario, I would hope that you would agree. It's like adding layer after layer of varnish on top of the wood. You soon can't even see the original wood at all, and you can't really get to the bottom of it, where you started.

In your role as chair of the federation for a while yet and, in any event, in your role as Premier of Canada's largest province, I urge you to take initiatives to get a longer-term discussion going on how we can reform this system, which has now had far too much tinkering and fiddling on all sides, for various reasons, over the years by all kinds of different people.

Finally, consistent with the rest of what I've said today, I hope that the Premier will, as we go forward, choose the tenor and the tone of his representation of Ontario very carefully.

It is my own experience that the more specifics and substance you have on the list of items you're putting forward, and the more thought you've given it in advance—ideally, backed up by lots of facts and evidence—and the more you include longer-term considerations and solutions as opposed to short-term fixes, which by definition can provoke more short-term emotion, and finally, the more carefully one chooses one's words, without weakening your resolve, the better you will often do.

We look forward to learning more details of the agreement, and any progress, as I said over the weekend, is welcome progress. We also look forward to working with you to advance Ontario's cause in the days, weeks and months ahead.

## NURSES

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** It should be on the record that I was the only member of provincial Parliament to show up to lend personal support to the Premier and his Ontario team.

I want to congratulate and acknowledge the tremendous contribution that nurses make in the province of Ontario. I had the opportunity to work as a nurse at the Queensway Carleton Hospital for a day to learn about the

good work they do. We should acknowledge their outstanding contribution to making our health system the great system it is.

## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** I want to respond to the Premier's statement today to say that I think any member of this Legislature who has served here over the last 15 years recognizes that there is some imbalance between federal governments, provincial governments and municipal governments. The federal government continues to enjoy the greatest taxing room and the greatest taxing power. Meanwhile, over the last 15 years, more and more of the responsibilities for providing the services that are important in people's everyday lives have been downloaded on to provinces and on to municipalities. I think we all recognize that that is something that needs to be addressed within the Canadian federation, and I, as much as anyone else in this Legislature, want to see that addressed.

But I want to remind the Premier of what he and his colleagues used to say on this issue. This is a quote from the current Minister of Finance: "I was appalled and embarrassed that an NDP Premier, any Premier in Ontario, could whine and whimper about not getting more from the national government." That was only a few years ago.

I want to quote the present Minister of Energy: "They like to blame the federal government for this, that or the other thing, they like to imply a whole bunch of things...." That was the current Minister of Energy just a couple of years ago.

So one of the things I find interesting is that this is a government that is a very recent convert to this. You used to scorn, you used to literally ridicule anyone who raised the issue of either fiscal imbalance or responsibility imbalance with the federal government.

## 1420

I just want to review this weekend, because the Premier has given his speech, but I want to remind the Premier of this; there are a few things here that are important. For example, there is the \$1.5 billion for post-secondary education. I just want to remind the Premier that Paul Martin and Jack Layton reached that accord a couple of weeks ago. This money was going to come to Ontario regardless, as a result of that accord. I just want to point out that there's going to be some money for environmental initiatives. Again, that accord was reached between Paul Martin and Jack Layton a couple of weeks ago. That money was going to come to Ontario regardless. Then there is the issue of a new labour market agreement, with some training money. You will know that additional money for training for workers was again part of the accord reached between Paul Martin and Jack Layton a couple of weeks ago, and that money was going to come to Ontario regardless.

I just want to say to the Premier that I'm glad you had a good weekend with your federal colleague, but in fact

much of what you try to boast about here was already agreed to in an accord between Jack Layton and Paul Martin. That money was coming to Ontario regardless. So congratulations on the weekend. What did you add?

### NURSES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** It goes without saying that my caucus and I salute Ontario nurses for the tremendous work they do every day for Ontario patients. They provide excellent, high-quality care in Ontario hospitals, in all floors and in all capacities, in long-term-care homes, in home care, in community health centres and in public health units. We thank them for their commitment, their dedication, their hard work and their incredible contribution to Ontario's health care system.

It's too bad that the McGuinty government sent a chill through the nursing profession when the Minister of Health approved 757 full-time equivalent nursing layoffs in mid-January. So many nurses work part time, work casual, so the number will probably be 1,000 nurses actually lost. Of course, our hospitals can ill-afford this.

Doris Grinspun, executive director of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, said, "I am not aware of any hospital that has said to me, 'We have a surplus of nurses.' All of a sudden we do? That means we're cutting services."

This is counter to anything the minister has said about this, or the president of the ONA, who also said that the McGuinty government has done a 180-degree turn on its stated commitment. Nurses feel betrayed; nurses have lost confidence.

During this week, we should be hiring and not firing nurses. That's the message Ontario New Democrats want to deliver.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery a parliamentary delegation from the Kingdom of the Netherlands: the standing committee on education of the second chamber of the States General. Please join me in warmly welcoming them to the assembly.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for a member from each party to speak for up to five minutes in recognition of Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

**The Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent, as requested by the government House leader? Agreed.

### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** In a ceremony at Queen's Park earlier today, we recognized and honoured 14 Holocaust survivors whose unbelievable stories of anguish, suffering and survival of both body and spirit

are a testimony to the human will to live. These Holocaust survivors, who are in the House today, came to Ontario, rebuilt their lives and were honoured for their wonderful contribution as citizens of Ontario.

Today, we recognize Yom Hashoah Ve Hagevurah, Holocaust Memorial Day—a day designated for Holocaust remembrance in communities around the world. This is the 12th year the Ontario Legislature has observed Holocaust Memorial Day, and I'm proud to say that Ontario was the first jurisdiction in the world, outside of the state of Israel, to officially recognize it.

This year's memorial is especially poignant for me, coming as it does near the 60th anniversary of the Allies' victory over Nazi tyranny in Europe. But it's also poignant because last March I travelled to Israel with the Commissioner of Emergency Management and a number of police officials to look at how the Israelis handle emergencies and counterterrorism. It was a working trip with firm, practical goals to achieve. We did what we intended, and yet we did find time to visit Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem.

The memorial is dedicated to preserving the memory and story of each of the six million people who died in the Holocaust. As a Jew, these memories strike the heart and the soul. Every Jew is touched by the Holocaust. We lost loved ones, family members or friends, or members in the community lost someone. The Holocaust echoes through generations. The loss is extraordinary.

At Yad Vashem, that loss is made real. It is concrete. You can touch it. In the Valley of Communities, you stand before wall after wall, carved out of solid rock, listing the names of more than 5,000 communities that lived, breathed, had life, in which men and women loved, married, raised children, worked, laughed and worshipped. Today, in most cases, nothing remains of these Jewish communities except for their names, forever frozen in the bedrock of Yad Vashem. It was here that I found the name of the town where my father was born, Czestochowa, and the town where my mother was born, Sosnowiec.

As I said, the Holocaust reaches out of the past and touches the shoulder of every Jew. But the Children's Memorial is especially sad. It commemorates the one and-a-half million Jewish children who perished in Hitler's Final Solution. The memorial is carved out of an underground cavern, and memorial candles, the customary Jewish tradition to remember the dead, are reflected infinitely in a dark and sombre space. They reminded me of a million stars. As you stand there, you can hear the names of the murdered children, their ages and countries of origin read in the background.

Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates all who died in the Holocaust, not just Jews. We also remember those whom the Nazis targeted for their race, their religion, their politics, their disabilities or their sexual orientation. It's important to set aside time to remember all these victims whose lives were taken by the Nazis. In remembering, we bear witness to what these men, women and children endured.



Tragically, other genocides have followed since World War II, in Cambodia and Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia. It is evident that we must continue our struggle to keep alive the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations 56 years ago in the shadow of the Holocaust. The declaration recognized the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as a foundation of freedom, justice and peace throughout the world. It called on the world to protect human rights by the rule of law.

We are indeed fortunate to live in Canada and in Ontario, but we must never take our good fortune for granted. We must guard our democratic institutions and democratic freedoms. We must appreciate, nurture and protect them, and we must constantly remind ourselves how easy it is to lose them.

While we were in the Valley of Communities at Yad Vashem, we laid a wreath and I recited a brief traditional Hebrew mourner's prayer, the Kaddish. Today in Jewish communities around the world, people will be reciting that prayer. On behalf of the victims, the survivors and their families I would like to recite that Hebrew prayer that is something for which all people may pray, and I ask for unanimous consent to allow me to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** *Remarks in Hebrew.*

One line of this prayer translates as, "He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us."

We must always remember so that the world will never forget.

1430

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** On behalf of our leader, John Tory, and the PC caucus—in fact, all members of the House—I'm pleased to speak on Yom Ha-Shoah, the Day of the Holocaust. I first would like to say that I will share my time with and commend my colleague from Halton for bringing forward his bill to declare Yom Ha-Shoah as a day of provincial observance.

Today we stand in silent remembrance of the six million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust. The commemoration is also an integral part of the 60th anniversary of the victory in Europe, which was also a victory over the Nazi genocidal terror.

However, 60 years after the inmates of the death camps were liberated, anti-Semitism continues to persist in Canada. The 2004 audit of anti-Semitic incidents issued by B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights reveals that such incidents have risen dramatically by over 46% last year alone, the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents ever recorded in its 22-year history.

But what is even more disturbing is when our justice system fails the victims of hate crimes. On April 16 of this year, an Ontario Court justice acquitted two teens of the charge of willfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group, saying that their intention was simply to get themselves on television. They painted swastikas on a

synagogue, they toppled gravestones, they shattered windows in the temple, they sprayed profanities on Jewish community property. But in delivering his verdict, the justice said that the charge that they were motivated by prejudice or hatred was not proven.

I join with Frank Dimant, the executive director and president of B'nai Brith Canada, in affirming that "the court has failed to recognize the hate-motivated aspect of this crime, which has had a deep impact on the Jewish community." The Ontario government needs to send a very strong message that anti-Semitism will not be tolerated in Ontario or anywhere else. I join with B'nai Brith in calling on the Attorney General to review this decision immediately.

I also join with B'nai Brith in calling for an amendment to the Criminal Code to include Holocaust denial as a hate crime and for new, stringent legislation to prohibit the publication of hate speech while establishing clear sentencing guidelines for hate crimes. It is only by taking such decisive action that we complete the tribute we pay today to the victims of the Holocaust and ensure that "Never again" becomes a reality.

Shalom aleichem.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** With the 60th anniversary of V-E Day and many of that greatest generation now gone, it's perhaps all the more poignant that we remember Yom Hashoah and Holocaust Memorial Day in Ontario. Having sponsored the bill that enacted Holocaust Memorial Day in Ontario, I have always been honoured to have taken an active role toward the goal of rooting out hatred and promoting human rights, civic and moral responsibility, and individual and democratic freedoms.

Holocaust Memorial Day in Ontario started out with a simple concept. It is clear from the lessons of history that there is an ever-present need to defend the pillars of justice in our society. We provided a day for the citizens of Ontario to reflect on the past, consider the present and prepare for the future. We commemorate the victims of the most terrible genocide in human history and hold it out as an example to all people from which to learn. We use it as a central point for our youth to learn the lessons of our society, our history and our shared values.

In 1933, the Nazis had systemically stripped the rights and freedoms from their own citizens simply because they were of Jewish descent. By the time the war began, Jews were second-class citizens. It must not be forgotten that each turn in the sickening spiral of the Holocaust occurred as, one by one, Jewish human rights were stripped away and no one rose to their defence. A lesson we have tried to take from this is "never again."

Each time we see even the smallest blow against the armour of a just society, we must rise to its defence. We must teach our children that the death of a just society can occur as a result of thousands of seemingly small attacks.

The lack of true democratic freedoms paved the way for these atrocities to occur. This theme runs through all examples of state-sponsored genocide, including Stalin's

Russia, Pol Pot's Cambodia and Rwanda. Where individuals do not have a direct stake in their own government, they often abrogate their civil and moral obligations as well. Citizens need to take an active role in defending society. These atrocities were carried out with the active help of local collaborators and the acquiescence or indifference of numerous bystanders.

However, some people recognized those obligations even while facing their fear. I ask everyone to remember the example of heroism set by Raoul Wallenberg, Canada's only honorary citizen, who was the Swedish ambassador to Hungary during World War II. Raoul Wallenberg saved the lives of over 100,000 Hungarian Jews, but was himself deported to Russia by Soviet forces at the end of the war, never to be heard from again.

Holocaust Memorial Day—Yom Hashoah—is an appropriate way to honour the memory of six million Holocaust victims and the victims of state-sponsored genocide around the world. We can remember this event in union with the Holocaust survivors living in Ontario and people around the world who have experienced or are indeed now defending themselves from similar horrors.

Finally, the ideals of cultural harmony, respect and multicultural societies have been forged from the fires of the Holocaust experience.

Ontario was the first jurisdiction outside of Israel to recognize Holocaust Memorial Day. Today, Holocaust Memorial Day is recognized in seven of the 10 provinces in Canada and 26 out of 50 US states, as well as many countries in Europe. It would be my hope and dream that respect for minorities, respect for individuals, can spread in the same way that Holocaust Memorial Day has spread around the continent and indeed around the world.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** On behalf of New Democrats, I'm proud to speak on this very important occasion.

Between 1933 and 1945, over six million Jewish men, women and children, in addition to millions of Polish, Russian and other nationals of Eastern Europe, were systematically put to death. Today, we pause to remember, because though time has passed, it is so important that we never forget.

During those 12 years, from 1933 to 1945, entire communities, villages, indeed entire generations of families were exterminated in the most brutal and calculated fashion. The suffering cannot be described and the loss to humanity and the damage to human dignity cannot be measured.

We need to remember that these acts were carried out in our times by a supposedly civilized society. Indeed, the Western world learned a lesson from these terrible events of the Holocaust. We learned that what we call "civilization" can be very tenuous—very tenuous indeed. That is why we must not allow ourselves to forget. For example, the early warning signs of the persecution of Jews existed in 1935, 1936 and 1937, but much of the world did nothing to oppose the persecution, and while

tens of thousands of Jewish families tried to flee Nazi Germany, many countries closed their borders. Indeed, in the pre-war years from 1935 to 1939, Canada essentially closed its borders.

We must always be on guard so that this cannot happen again. We must always speak out against anti-Semitism, hate and racism of any kind. When we reflect, we see that some of these events still happen today, in Rwanda, in Darfur. Our world still remains a violent and oppressive place for too many people. Countries continue to put their own citizens to death and continue to use military violence against their own citizens. People still live in incredible poverty, without access to food and shelter.

Today, we remember the sacrifices of those men and women who suffered and died during the worst period of modern history and, today, we remember our responsibilities to each other. Today is about recommitting ourselves to the task of making the world a safer place, a better place for everyone, no matter their race, their religion, their gender or their age. That must be our commitment.

1440

**The Speaker:** Would all members please rise to observe a moment of silence in recognition of Yom Hashoah.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, on Saturday you settled for just over \$1 billion a year for five years from the federal government—some distance from the \$5-billion down payment you spoke of before the meeting. Putting that aside for the moment, can you tell us exactly how your deal breaks down over the five years and which parts of the deal, if any, can be implemented without federal legislation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** First of all, let me make it clear that any arrangement we have with the federal government is entirely dependent on having a federal government that supports fairness for Ontario.

I'm very pleased with what we have been able to accomplish. With respect to the immigration agreement, for example, new Canadians arriving in Ontario, instead of benefiting from \$800 worth of supports, will now get \$3,400 worth of supports. I think that is a significant increase. By the way, that funding does not flow to the Ontario government; it flows to our settlement services, ESL services and the like. With respect to the labour market agreement, funding will go from about \$1,100 per worker to \$1,800 per worker. Again, that money does not



flow to the Ontario government; it flows to our training agencies.

This is an agreement that benefits the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Tory:** As I said earlier, we welcome the progress. Any progress is indeed welcome and we are just trying to nail down some of the specifics.

The Prime Minister said in the press conference that the two of you held after the meeting—and you told reporters yesterday, according to Karen Howlett's story in the *Globe and Mail*—that more than half the funding promised under this deal is in danger should the budget bill not pass. Given this, at any time during the nine-hour meeting, did you raise with the Prime Minister the possibility of a separate piece of legislation that could ensure speedy passage by all parties of the benefits of this particular deal that would flow to people in Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I note with interest that we have had indication now from the federal Conservative Party that they are fully supportive of the arrangement I was able to make with the Prime Minister on the weekend. Again, I say to the member opposite that it's incumbent upon all of us in this House to understand that unless we have a federal government that is supportive of fairness for Ontario, we cannot continue to move forward.

We've made some important initial steps this weekend. I think the people of Ontario are pleased with that progress, but I think they are quite right to expect more of us still to come. The Prime Minister has agreed to a second meeting. I've indicated to Mr. Harper that I'm prepared to meet with him. Should Mr. Layton wish to meet with me, I will be prepared to do that as well. The people of Ontario have demanded that we approach this in a non-partisan way and we will continue to do so.

**Mr. Tory:** The Premier has pointed out that the deputy leader of the Conservative Party, Peter MacKay, has already stated that a Conservative government would honour this deal. In the spirit that the Premier spoke about, I did visit, as I think he knows, with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Harper, in Ottawa, and with the Ontario Conservative MPs to support the argument being advanced on behalf of Ontario. Mr. Layton has already indicated as well, as I understand it, his support for this deal.

So my question would be, given that perhaps it didn't come up on Saturday, would you now consider a request to be made of all three party leaders on your behalf and on behalf of Ontario that this deal be put into a separate bill to ensure speedy passage and so that this money can start to flow to the people who will benefit from it as soon as possible?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I sincerely appreciate the advice offered by the leader of the official opposition. But rather than my engaging in the orchestration of some tactics that may or may not succeed on Parliament Hill today, where much is in the air, I think it's more important to secure support from the individual party leaders for

the arrangements we made, and that is the avenue we will proceed down.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question. The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** My question again is to the Premier—and I would tell him that I'm prepared to continue to assist in that regard as best I can.

Still on the matter of this agreement, on Friday, in yet another one of the Prime Minister's announcements, it was revealed that Ontario would receive money for institutional daycare. The announcement totals \$1.8 billion over five years for Ontario. Because there seem to be a couple of missing parts in the list that has been carried in the press, and even in your own outline of the money today—the total of \$5.7 billion—can you tell us whether or not this \$1.8 billion announced for daycare on Friday is included in the deal you made with the Prime Minister on Saturday, or is this money in addition to the deal you made?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Those were two separate matters, and I know that the minister is prepared to provide more detail should the member require it.

**Mr. Tory:** Premier, in the deal that Mr. Martin struck with Mr. Layton, \$1.5 billion over two years, was set aside for post-secondary education and training. Ontario's share of that money, therefore, would have been approximately \$300 million a year, based on population. Your deal, arrived at on Saturday, calls for \$1.55 billion over five years for post-secondary education, or exactly \$300 million a year in each of the next five years. Can the Premier confirm whether the money you claim to have negotiated from the Prime Minister is the same money that he already agreed to give Ontario, or is this additional money to that which was promised to Mr. Layton earlier?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The innovation connected with the particular matter of the post-secondary funding is that I was able to secure from the Prime Minister for the first time an agreement that, moving forward, this funding for post-secondary education will be delivered to Ontario for the first time on a per capita basis, which is really good news for Ontarians and especially for our students.

**Mr. Tory:** That is welcome news, but maybe I could just repeat my supplementary question to the Premier: Is the \$1.55 billion over five years for post-secondary education that you have outlined as part of your deal with the Prime Minister, which we all welcome—we're simply looking to see whether this is money that you negotiated for the first time on Saturday, or whether it is the same money that Mr. Layton negotiated with the Prime Minister some time ago. It's a very simple question, and I'd appreciate an answer. Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** What we achieved was the per capita commitment for the people of Ontario, which I think is welcome news. I also indicated that I'm prepared, and the Prime Minister is prepared, to meet once again. We had a very lengthy discussion about post-secondary education. I can tell you that when I have an opportunity to meet with Premiers, there is tremendous

interest in what we can do together to develop our human capital.

So, yes, to be very direct, what we have done is not new money. I did not negotiate that new money. What we did of significance was ensure that that money is now delivered to us on a per capita basis, and all new money going forward when it comes to post-secondary education.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Ontarians are worried that they are going to get a nasty surprise on May 11: a budget featuring privatization and deregulation through the back door, a budget that Mike Harris could be proud of. They are particularly worried and concerned about privatization of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, an organization that delivers over \$1 billion in revenue to the government every year and an organization that, frankly, results in safer, healthier distribution of alcohol in the province.

Premier, will you categorically rule out any form of privatization of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, including royalty and income trusts, in your May 11 budget?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Again, I think the public should be aware that the Minister of Finance has established a group to look at this very matter. They are looking at it very comprehensively. I think what the minister has said is that we can expect them to report sometime in the spring, so I think we're best advised to await the outcome of that quite comprehensive study that the minister has indicated will be available in the spring and see what that study shows. They have been given very clear direction. I think the minister has indicated that there's no intention to sell off the LCBO, but the interest is in finding the best long-term way of dealing with beverage alcohol in the province of Ontario. As I've said, we have a very competent group of people looking at that, expected to report later this spring.

**Mr. Hampton:** I'm shocked and appalled. The McGuinty team that used to rant about privatization now refuses to rule it out.

Ontarians are worried about another privatization through the back door: P3 partnerships in terms of schools and hospitals. Ontarians want public hospitals, public schools. They know that when you move to private financing or private involvement, the borrowing costs are greater, plus the private corporation will want to make a profit. For example, on a \$1-billion hospital, \$200 million gets siphoned off to private corporations.

Premier, will you today rule out any P3 involvement in our schools, our hospitals and other kinds of public infrastructure in your May 11 budget?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Because this involves the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, I'll refer that to him.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I thank the member for the question. Back in July of last year, we introduced an investment framework for the province of Ontario that had five fundamental principles. I want to list them for the member, because I know it's too easy for him to go to a Web site to actually look it up.

Number one: Public interest is paramount. Number two: Value for money must be achieved. Number three: Appropriate public ownership and control must be preserved, and we have specifically said that hospitals, schools and water will continue to be publicly owned. Number four: Accountability must be maintained. Number five: The process must be fair, transparent and efficient.

The strategies that we are bringing do not involve the privatization of public assets. Talk of privatization could in fact misinform and potentially mislead the public, and I think it is important that we all be very clear about the strategies we're going to bring and the benefits we are going to bring. We are going to get on and solve the infrastructure deficit that the previous government left, because this government has the courage to undertake those strategies.

**Mr. Hampton:** It was a simple question: Will the McGuinty government rule out any P3 operation of schools and hospitals and other public infrastructure? Once again, I think what we heard is that the McGuinty government is entertaining just that.

Premier, over the past 10 years, skyrocketing tuition fees have forced university and college students into greater and greater debt. Now students and their parents are scared that your government is going to deregulate tuition fees, causing another round of skyrocketing tuition. Federal moneys for post-secondary education negotiated by Jack Layton and Paul Martin are expressly dedicated to making tuition fees more affordable for Ontario students and their families. Will you rule out any further deregulation of college and university tuition fees in your May 11 budget? Yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I'm really happy to rise to respond to the question from the leader of the third party.

First of all, I have encouraged him to wait. He doesn't have much longer to wait. You know, we will all wait together for the good news that we'll hear on Wednesday.

I'd also like to remind the member that our government, the McGuinty government, is the first government ever to have frozen tuition fees here in Ontario for two years. I think it's also important to remember that the NDP had actually promised to freeze tuition fees. Instead, they raised the fees by 50%. So I rest my case.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):**

Again, to the Premier. I've asked three simple questions: Please rule out tuition deregulation—won't do that; please rule out P3 hospitals, P3 schools—won't do that; please rule out any form of privatization of the LCBO—won't do that. All of this sounds like backdoor privatization to me.

I want to ask now about autism treatment for children aged six and over, because before the election, Premier, you said, "I believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six."

Premier, will Wednesday's budget extend and safeguard IBI treatment for all autistic children over the age of six?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** There are more services available to children with autism of all ages than ever before. We have increased the under-six program by \$10 million, hired over 100 therapists, and as of April increased the number of children receiving IBI by 25%; and as of April as well, decreased the waiting list for assessment by 72%.

We know we need to do more and we will do more in order to meet the needs of these children.

**Mr. Hampton:** I take it from that that despite the Premier's promise, children over the age of six will continue to go without IBI treatment

I want to ask now about families that have children who are severely disabled. The Ombudsman is investigating why families are being forced to give up custody of their children in order to obtain services, and on Friday a group of families came to Queen's Park to announce a lawsuit against the McGuinty government for failing their children. One parent was Anne Larcade, of Huntsville. She was forced to sign a temporary custody agreement in February to get her son, Alexandre, into a group home in Guelph, three and a half hours away. She doesn't want to lose custody of her family, but your government is forcing her to do that.

Denying services to families who don't give up custody is wrong. Will Wednesday's budget include enough money to support children with special needs with their families, rather than the families having to give up custody: yes or no?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** We are already doing a great deal for these children. It's a system that's been underfunded for many years. This can't be fixed overnight.

In our first budget we increased funding for special needs by \$74 million—a 15% increase. What I have done in the meantime is ask my ministry to reissue the directive that was issued by the former government that no children's aid society should take parental rights away unless the child is in need of protection. This should not be happening. I understand it is happening. I welcome the

report from the Ombudsman, and we will move forward to solve this problem.

**Mr. Hampton:** This is not an issue of money. The minister says the children are getting service, but the McGuinty government forces these families to give up custody before the children can get the service.

I want to ask the Premier about a federal funding issue. The federal government provides Ontario with money through the national child benefit supplement for the poorest children in Ontario. Your government claws back that money. You take money from the poorest children and the poorest families in Ontario. Now, you just gave a long statement celebrating your meeting with Prime Minister Paul Martin. Will you tell us, Premier, are you now going to stop clawing back federal money which should be going to the poorest children in Ontario? Are you going to stop the clawback which you yourself said is morally wrong?

1500

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** I'd like to refer this to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I do welcome the opportunity to speak once again to the third party to explain the host of changes that we've brought in to help people of low income in Ontario, and in particular children. When we look across the breadth of our government, right across the board—the move with affordable housing, thanks once again to the federal government signing finally with the provincial government, where we can help low-income families; child care monies finally going to child care from the federal government to Ontario; increases to agencies that they have not seen in 12 or 13 years.

Finally, let me say to the third party that in our last budget, when we stopped the policy and \$7 million more was returned to families across the province, that happened to be a part of the last budget that your party voted against. So let's not forget your history on this. When push comes to shove and you finally see a party that wants to help families—you, in your history in this House, voted against the last budget.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. I'd like the members to stop their uttering of unparliamentary language and stop inciting unparliamentary behaviour.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax):** My question is for the Premier. You say you won't raise taxes in the budget on Wednesday, and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities just used the word "frozen" about tuition. There's another set of big fees that are frozen in Ontario. Those are fees on real estate transactions—people buying houses in the province. As you know, those fees now are payable to Teranet. There is a freeze on Teranet's fees and the right to regulate them after the freeze expires. Now, media reports have it that you've

planned some sort of sale or income trust or some kind of deal with Teranet. What I'd like you to do, Premier, today is to confirm to the people of Ontario that you will not take any steps that will result in an increase of fees on real estate transactions in Ontario.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The Minister of Consumer and Business Services.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I find it rather ironic that the honourable member asked that question, when in fact it was his government, in one of their ludicrous fire sales, that actually sold the Ontario government's share of Teranet. This is the same party that gave us the 407. They have absolutely not a whit of credibility when it comes to talking about Teranet or about public-private partnership.

I'm not going to stand here and speculate on what's going to be in the budget. Two days from now, the Minister of Finance will stand and deliver the good news to the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Flaherty:** The minister is correct about one thing: It was the previous government that put in the freeze on the fees.

Given his answer, after Wednesday the people of Ontario can now expect an increase in fees to happen on real estate transactions; a tax, by any other name.

Premier, our leader, John Tory, asked you last week to ensure that revenue for any sale of assets will go to reduce the growing provincial debt under your government in the province of Ontario. We hear lots of rumours about fire sales and assets that may be sold in the announcements that come in the budget on Wednesday. Will you ensure that proceeds from these fire sales that you undertake will not go into the consolidated general revenue fund but will go into separate accounts so that the people of Ontario can follow that money and make sure the money is not used up in your reckless spending from the consolidated general revenue fund?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I refer it to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** The public has recognized that two days from now we will see the budget here, and you'll know that.

The thing I can guarantee you is that under Dalton McGuinty, we will never see a deal like the 407, where the users of the 407 have been ripped off with a deal that sold them down the road for 99 years. The people of Ontario are now stuck with having to pay exorbitant tolls for 99 years. I can guarantee to the member that you will not see a deal under a Dalton McGuinty government like the 407 rip-off.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** A question to the Minister of the Environment: Bill 133 falls far short of providing the kind of pollution prevention Ontarians want to protect both the environment and human health. Today, leading environmental groups called on

you to strengthen, not weaken, Bill 133, so that it includes a mandatory requirement for pollution prevention planning and not simply pollution control. My question is, will you amend Bill 133 to make pollution prevention plans, emergency reduction targets and annual reporting on the plans mandatory?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment):** I'm very pleased to say that Bill 133 very obviously demonstrates our government's commitment to protect the environment, to require industries to implement spills prevention plans and, I would also say very importantly for municipalities that are impacted when a spill happens in their community, to provide a fund they will be able to access in a very few days to help compensate them for their out-of-pocket expenses.

I believe that our commitment to the environment, to being proactive and preventive is very clear in Bill 133.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, you should read the bill again, because it's not in there at all.

Your own industrial pollution action team recommended mandatory requirements for pollution prevention in their report to you last year. This morning, environmental groups reported that from 2003 to 2004, under your watch, the volume of spills by MISA-regulated facilities increased 360%. Rick Smith of Environmental Defence said that toxic spills are "as common as potholes in the spring." Only mandatory pollution prevention plans will reduce the amount of chemicals in use and therefore able to enter the environment through spills in the first place.

Minister, a 360% increase would make even the Conservatives blush. I'm going to ask you again, will you make pollution prevention planning, reporting and emission reduction targets mandatory requirements under Bill 133?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** The honourable member should know that it was because of the number of spills events that Bill 133 was introduced. Our government has said that we are going to take action and ensure (1) that communities are protected and (2), that prevention plans will be required. That is a part of the bill. You've suggested I read the bill; I think she hasn't read the bill.

It's very important. We have made a commitment to the people of Ontario. We are prepared to act. I'm very happy that this bill is going to committee. We will be very eager to hear the proposals and suggestions by a range of people who have indicated an interest in this bill. But make no mistake; our government is absolutely committed to protecting communities and the environment in the province of Ontario.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. We all know that getting people out of their cars and on to public transit is vital to sustaining our communities, our environment and our economy. Getting people on to public transit means our roads are less congested, which means there is less idling and our investments aren't



stuck in traffic. And increasing public transit also means a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that fill up the air and create smog, which negatively affects the health of Ontarians.

During the election, we promised to provide municipalities with two cents of the provincial gas tax to support growing municipalities like my city of Brampton fund public transit. Can you tell me how our government is keeping this commitment to municipalities and also how it will help communities like Brampton with public transit?

1510

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I would like to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale for his question. The other government made a commitment to share two cents of the gasoline tax with the municipalities. This was one of the key election commitments that we made, and we moved on that commitment in our very first budget. What that means is about \$156 million to the municipalities that they never had before, in the very first year of the gas tax sharing. Over a three-year period, this amount will be around \$700 million, and in four years, roughly \$1 billion.

We need to create a transit culture in this province if we want to address the issues of congestion, and this gas tax money will go a long way for us to improve the service levels and also increase ridership in this province. I was very pleased to be with the mayor of Brampton this morning to make the gas tax announcement.

**Mr. Kular:** I'm positive that the funding Brampton will receive will greatly assist in increasing public transit ridership. It will also improve the quality and reliability of the transit system throughout my community.

Minister, the projected growth rates for the GTA are expected to rise by four million over the next couple of decades. How is this government ensuring that transit ridership increases in order to ease the congestion on our roadways?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** As I said, I was with the mayor of Brampton this morning to make the announcement on the gas tax. The city of Brampton is getting \$3.2 million in gas tax money this year. I want to congratulate the city of Brampton for coming up with a very strong and innovative transit plan to improve transit in the city that will improve service and increase ridership. They're expecting an 8% increase in ridership in the city of Brampton, and they are going to connect it to York region as well. Out of the 30 routes they currently have, 22 routes will be revamped, and five new routes will be added. They will also increase employment and add new buses. I'm sure that will go a long way for us to address some of the issues that the member has raised in his question for the city of Brampton.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** My question is to the Premier. It was with great interest that I read the

communiqué following your meeting with the Prime Minister this past Saturday. The one word not contained in the communiqué is the single biggest priority not just for people in Ottawa, but for people right across the province of Ontario, and that word is "health." Premier, why isn't there a single new dollar for the number one priority of people in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I can tell you that we did talk about health, and I share the member's disappointment, to be perfectly honest, that we weren't able to achieve more progress in that particular area.

For example, as I mentioned earlier in my statement, we get much less on a per capita basis in Ontario than they do in other provinces. I think that is unacceptable. I think it's a blatant unfairness, one that has existed for far too long. Obviously, that means we still have more work to do.

Having said that, I will say that I'm also proud that I was able to play some role in landing the last health accord between the federal government and all of our first ministers, which brought new money to the province of Ontario and all provinces. There's more to be done, and we look forward to doing it.

**Mr. Baird:** Premier, in the communiqué released following your meeting with Paul Martin, there are a lot of words like, "Our officials will work..." or "Within 30 days we will conclude..." What amounted out of your meeting were five promises, and I have a simple question I'd like to ask the Premier. My simple question to you is, do you trust Paul Martin?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's a question that's better suited to the other House, to which my friend aspires.

The issue here is—and I think we've done a pretty good job of negotiating this; it's not the easiest thing in the world to do—we have tried to proceed in this matter on a non-partisan basis. It will always be in the interests of the people of Ontario that we have a federal government that recognizes there is a blatant issue of unfairness here. We made some progress over the weekend. We look forward to making more progress in the days to come.

#### REFINERY CLOSURE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is for the Premier. Inco Ltd. seems poised to make a decision to shut down its copper refinery in our community and process raw copper outside Ontario. If that happens, we will lose about 160 good-paying union, management and support staff jobs from the community.

Inco has been refining copper at the Copper Cliff refinery for over 60 years now. There is no reason for them to shut down the refinery or process raw copper outside Ontario at a cost of 160 jobs to our community.

Premier, will you tell Inco they can't do this?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** The member across would know full well that on Friday I met with the United Steelworkers of America representatives. We had a good, frank and very productive meeting. They asked that I try to bring all parties together for a meeting. I should let the member know that I am working on that and hope to facilitate that as quickly as possible.

**Ms. Martel:** A supplementary to the Premier: They also asked that the Premier intervene and tell Inco they can't do this, and that needs to be on the public record.

Look, Premier, the resources in the Sudbury basin belong to the people of Ontario, not to Inco. It's a privilege for Inco to mine and refine the resources, not a right. Your government has agreements, permits and licences with Inco to use the resources, and you should use all of those to force Inco to continue to refine copper at the Copper Cliff refinery.

Inco made \$612 million in 2004. They made over \$300 million in the first quarter of 2005, and \$215 million of that came out of the Ontario division, primarily out of Sudbury. There is no reason for Inco to be allowed to refine raw copper outside Ontario.

I ask you again, Premier, will you intervene and tell Inco they'll not take the resource and not take the jobs out of our community, yes or no?

**Hon. Mr. Bartolucci:** We on this side of the House are certainly all very concerned about any potential job loss. That's why I continue to be in touch with the union, with the company and with all the other stakeholders involved. It's my hope that all parties can come together and come up with ideas and suggestions as to how we can work to protect refinery jobs. It's not my intention, nor will it ever be the intention of this government, to stand up and bash companies or unions or anything else. We're about finding solutions to problems. They're about Shelley-come-lately, bringing a problem that's already being addressed by our government in a very proactive, real way.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. As we all know, Ontario is the economic engine of Canada. We can cite all the statistics we want, but the most important one is the job numbers that come out on the first Friday of every month.

At the moment, Ontario faces some real challenges in terms of a sluggish US economy and high oil prices. Despite that, in my community there are businesses like Arvato Services, which has announced it is expanding and hiring 150 new employees; Brick Brewing, which is investing \$7 million in a new warehouse facility in my area; and Brock Solutions of Kitchener, an engineering firm which has added 70 employees in the past year.

In light of the figures released last week, can the minister report to the House the state of job creation and the strength of our economy?

1520

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I'd like to thank the member for the question. The good news is this: In the month of April, we had a net increase in jobs of 26,000. Full-time jobs increased by 58,000. That was the largest monthly increase in the past eight years. Since October 2003, employment has risen by 146,000. In addition, the unemployment rate went down to 6.8%. So there's a great deal of confidence in the Ontario economy.

I'm happy to report that there are some additional investments that have been made. ISRA Textile Manufacturing is scheduled to open in Niagara Falls, with an additional 500 people hired. That's good news for the Niagara region.

**Mr. Milloy:** I think we recognize the good news. In my community of Kitchener-Waterloo, the unemployment rate is at 5.9%. I know the unemployment rate in Hamilton is at 5.1%, and Kingston is down to 6.3%.

Despite this, I know there's still concern about the manufacturing sector in our province. In my area, we have a strong manufacturing sector and also a strong IT sector, but there are always concerns about the future. I was wondering if the minister could report about the future for these two sectors, as well as other key sectors in our economy.

**Hon. Mr. Cordiano:** The good news, as well, is that manufacturing jobs increased by 8,000 in the province of Ontario. That's really good news for us. There was also an increase of 20,000 new jobs in the construction sector. The IT sector is also seeing an increase in jobs.

But what I'm really interested to report is that when I was in Washington, I had a meeting with the National Association of Manufacturers of the US. What they confirmed for us is that we continue to hold a cost advantage over the US when it comes to manufacturing. The differences are quite significant.

For example, in the costs of health care and pension benefits, we have a 4.8% advantage over the US. When it comes to health care costs in the auto sector alone, this amounts to \$2,000 per vehicle produced in the auto sector. In IT, the advantage is 16.7%. So the economy in Ontario, despite the challenges of being faced with a higher dollar—we're overcoming those challenges and we're meeting the test. Things are going very well in the Ontario economy.

## STUDENT LITERACY

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, today's Globe editorial does something that, for some reason, you failed to do last week. It credits the previous government for implementing the high school literacy test. It highlights the fact that the test was developed to help young people by making very certain that they have the literacy skills they need to succeed as adults, and to ensure that those who need extra help are identified long before they hit the job market.



Premier, do you now agree that we owe it to our young people and to their parents to hold our own education system accountable through continued standardized testing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I have always agreed with the notion of standardized testing. I think Ontario parents, and Ontario taxpayers, for that matter, are entitled to know what kinds of results we're getting for the investments that we are making in public education. By the way, of course, when we do have results, it enables us to determine on a year-to-year basis our improvement or lack thereof. In fact, I've said in the past that I like the notion of a standardized test. I have congratulated former Premier Harris for bringing those innovations in.

Where I was critical was that you can't just put in the tests; you've got to put in place the additional supports to ensure that our young people can perform well on those tests. That's why we're proud to have invested thus far \$1.1 billion more into public education for more supports, more teachers and better training.

**Mr. Klees:** Thank you, Premier. We're encouraged by that. We want to congratulate the students and we want to congratulate the teachers for the some 11% improvement in the student passing rate on this literacy test.

Can you commit, to students and their parents, that future test score improvements will in fact be as a result of student achievement, not as a result of lowered standards being applied to those tests?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I don't know whether or not the member opposite is intimating that somehow improvements this year are the result of a reduction in the standard. I don't think he's saying that. If he is saying that, then I would have preferred that he had said that directly.

It's not about reducing standards. Our young people have tremendous potential. It's about ensuring that we have the necessary supports. We're doing that through smaller classes, more teachers, better training for our teachers, peace and stability, long-term agreements, and a government that supports public education. That's fundamentally how we're going to improve those test scores—better results for our students.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** My question is to the Minister of Energy. Ontario needs leadership to promote the conservation of electricity. However, your plan to allow landlords, without the consent of the tenants, to install sub-meters is wrong for all the 1.5 million tenants of this province. Sub-metering apartments will cost the vast majority of tenants more than they could ever hope to save. Low- and modest-income tenants can ill afford to pay for the lack of their landlords' conservation strategy.

Minister, it is the landlords who refuse to invest in conservation by replacing dated appliances, the landlords who refuse to insulate and provide energy-efficient

doors, and the landlords who do not convert from electric heat and water heaters.

Are you going to rethink this plan that, in the end, is only going to zap Ontario tenants?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** First of all, the government has not formally introduced a policy for implementation of smart meters across the province. We are committed to them. We are moving forward. We haven't addressed the specific issue of rental accommodation.

The member quite correctly points out that there are challenges associated with extending the benefits of conservation to those with modest means and those particularly in rental situations. Accordingly, we will be introducing legislation later this year that will establish a broad framework for the installation of smart meters and will leave open to this Legislature and to members of this government the opportunity to discuss implementation issues around smart meters.

The issue was raised by low-income groups last week. They raised some valid concerns that do need to be addressed in greater detail and need to be studied with more precision. I look forward to the member opposite's input into those discussions.

**Mr. Prue:** I thank you on the one hand, but I want some assurance from you on the other. The conservation strategies must start at the root. The basis for many problems in older-stock buildings in Ontario, as you're well aware, is out-dated, energy-hogging appliances. The tenants simply turning on or off the lights or on and off the television is minuscule in comparison with the heating systems, the water heating systems, the insulation and the energy-hogging old refrigerators that burn way too much electricity.

Minister, do the smart thing. At least announce today that you encourage conservation at the source. Don't punish the tenants. They've had enough. I want your assurance today that you're going to do the right thing and start with the landlords first.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The right thing is to conserve energy and to assist low-income residents of our province and people of more modest means to share in the benefits of conservation.

First of all, my ministry is working to help low-income energy consumers in Ontario. We've partnered with LIEN—that's the group that brought forward this report last week—to help this segment of Ontario's population. We partner with LIEN on a whole variety of things, including DSM plans, to help low-income electricity consumers. Brantford Hydro, for example, recently received authorization from the OEB to deliver low-income energy conservation in their community. We've partnered with the Social Housing Services Corp. to pilot centralized energy management services in 20 non-profit buildings in Ontario, a project that will be rolled out across 250,000 units.

That member and his party cancelled all conservation programs when in government. We're moving forward on them, and we're going to do it in a prudent manner

that will assist low-income Ontarians to share in the benefits of improved conservation of energy.

1530

### GROW BONDS PROGRAM

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Northerners, and certainly my constituents in Sault Ste. Marie, were very pleased that last year's budget committed to a pilot program for northern Ontario grow bonds. As you know, grow bonds are an idea generated by northerners, and our government responded quickly by working to implement this exciting initiative.

Grow bonds are provincially guaranteed, with competitive interest rates for residents of northern Ontario. The proceeds will be used to fund loans to small and medium-sized businesses, because northern businesses often have difficulty gaining access to capital. Could the minister please tell us the final total sales for the northern Ontario grow bonds program?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** The member from Sault Ste. Marie asks a very important question for northerners. I am very pleased and proud today to stand in the House and tell my fellow members in the Legislature, and also all of northern Ontario, that northerners purchased \$12.9 million worth of grow bonds over the purchase period. It is very important as well to know that this is roughly \$13 million that will go toward loans to create and expand businesses that will create real, long-term jobs in northern Ontario.

I am particularly impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of northerners with regard to the grow bonds project. This was a pilot project and it's turning out to be a very successful project, because northerners believe in northerners.

**Mr. Oraziotti:** I'm very pleased to hear that. After years of neglect by the past government, we have taken the initiative to implement a new program that is already showing success for northerners.

I know that we, as a northern caucus, worked hard to spread the word about this important opportunity, as did many of our northern stakeholders and community leaders. These people must be applauded for their confidence and their efforts to develop this program. My community of Sault Ste. Marie invested \$500,000 in the northern Ontario grow bonds program, and I'm very proud of our city's support for it.

Businesses are now applying for these loans. Who will be responsible for accessing and approving the loan applications?

**Hon. Mr. Bartolucci:** There is a board set up called the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corp. It's made up of northerners and they will be responsible for loan approvals, as well as the management of the corporate business affairs.

The deadline for submissions for loans was May 6. I am very encouraged by the response from northern in-

vestors, and I will be reporting to the House in a little while as this material becomes more available.

Again, I know my colleagues, and certainly the Minister of Finance, are very pleased with the response from northerners to our northern Ontario grow bonds pilot project. Finally we have a government that is responsive to the needs of northerners.

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. Last week, I drove to the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association conference in Kenora. While I was there, I spoke with municipal representatives about the doctor situation in the community of Geraldton. The people of Geraldton would like to know what you're doing to fill the void left by the doctors who are leaving their community this Friday.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I've been working very closely with my colleague, the local member, on that issue. It's a very challenging one indeed for the people of Geraldton, and I recognize this entirely. We've worked very closely with the mayor as well, and a variety of initiatives are together and in place to assist, both on the short-term and on the longer term.

I think it's fair to say that on the shorter term, the health needs of the people in Geraldton will be met through a variety of coverages, which are often referred to as locums. These tend to be very short stints of doctors coming in from other places. On the longer term, we have in place very generous funding incentives for doctors to practise in communities like Geraldton. We will continue to work with the local community until we're satisfied that their needs can be met on a longer-term basis. But on the short term, for certain, the people of Geraldton should know that through locums and through the work of the Group Health Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, which has been helpful, and adjacent communities like Marathon, we're seeking to provide the necessary coverage while we address these concerns on a longer-term basis.

**Mr. Miller:** Minister, the situation is that all the doctors but two leave this Friday, May 13. The reality is that the locum pool has suddenly evaporated, so there's a very big question mark hanging over the heads of the people in Geraldton. You made a commitment to Geraldton that services wouldn't be cut or the hospital closed. I'd like you to tell the community of Geraldton where the replacement doctors are coming from and when they will arrive.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I hope that the honourable member had the candour, while he was addressing the situation, to acknowledge that a big contribution to this problem is the fact that for five years, the party that he's part of sat on their hands while communities like Geraldton and more than 100 others across Ontario fell short of doctors.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** That was then; this is now.



**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member heckles to say, "That was then; this is now." He's one of those who subscribe to the view, I guess, that you can produce a doctor as fast as you can produce a pizza, for example. But you can't. We're working overtime—double-step, two-time—to be able to produce more doctors in Ontario. There's tremendous evidence of that. On the shorter term, we will have to rely upon things like locums. I personally have come across doctors, even in the last five or six days, who have indicated to me that they'll be taking part of their summer leave and making it available to people in Geraldton. That's evidence that we've let everybody know of the really difficult circumstances that are there. We have common cause with the people of Geraldton. We're working hand in hand with the mayor with a view toward addressing this situation that we all acknowledge is a very challenging one indeed.

#### ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** The minister should get his hecklers straight.

My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. You know that there are more roadside zoos in this province than anywhere else in this country. We have no regulations in place to protect the welfare of the animals—or the visiting public, even more importantly. We know that there are regulations that have been written up that have been sitting on your desk for some months now, and we've seen nothing come out of the process to date. Can you please tell us today when we can expect those new regulations dealing with this issue to be brought before the province?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources):** This is an important issue, and there's a lot of public interest, obviously, in how animals are cared for and tended in zoos across this province. We've been consulting with that community to make sure that the regulations we bring forward are sensible and practical and can be implemented in a timely fashion. I'm saying to the member that he should stay tuned and we will be presenting them shortly.

**Mr. Bisson:** That's just the problem. People have been staying tuned, and they've seen nothing coming out of this channel just yet. The issue is that not only are the regulations not coming out, but it's also—

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Don't be so hard on yourself.

**Mr. Bisson:** When you're heckling me, it is funny. That was good.

Anyway, the issue is that not only are the regulations not coming out, but you know as well as I do that one of the outstanding issues is that of the exotic species, such as lions, tigers and others. It is rumoured that there is nothing in the regulations you're looking at that will deal with exotic species. Will you confirm, yes or no: Will the regulations deal with exotic species?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** I'm addressing an exotic species right across the room. As a fellow northerner, I add that as a compliment, and I know he takes it as a compliment.

I would say again to the member that we want to make sure we get this right. There are a lot of concerns, whether it be caring for indigenous species or exotic species in the varied zoos across the province. We're working with the stakeholders to make sure we get new regulations right, that they be practical and that we can implement them in a timely way. I say to the member that we'll get there shortly.

**Mr. Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Teddy bears are not an exotic species.

#### SPORT FISHING

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Sport fishing is an extremely popular activity in this province. My wife and I have a 7- and an 8-year-old who, once we taught them to not eat the worms, discovered that they really enjoyed fishing. Over the past weekend, the Bay of Quinte in my area was literally full of boats, with the opening of walleye season. I understand that you're proposing a number of changes that will better serve today's anglers, and I wonder if you could share them with us, realizing that what you're doing will preserve the fish stock in Ontario. What are the regulation changes that you're proposing?

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources):** I'm glad to have the details of the fishing habits of the Parsons family, and I wish them well out there.

I would say to the member that what I want to be doing over the next few years is working with the anglers of this province to make sure they have a stake in how we regulate and conserve our fish resource. Rather than taking arbitrary fishing zones and formulating our regulations over that, what I want to do is look at ecologically based zones and basically form a type of stewardship council that would have governance over them. Working with the people who have the greatest stake in this in each community, I think we can come up with regulations that are sensible, and not just arbitrary, based on large geographic zones.

1540

**Mr. Parsons:** I believe anglers in Ontario want to do the right thing and abide by the rules, but currently they are rather confusing, to put it mildly. There are different seasons and different species throughout Ontario. In fact, the document your ministry puts out identifying rules and regulations throughout the province is fairly lengthy. Is there something you could do that would simplify it so that citizens don't inadvertently commit an offence and get themselves in trouble?

**Hon. Mr. Ramsay:** That's an excellent question. I think the complexity of the fishing regulations over the years has really turned people off. They're so complicated, and for some it's hard to figure out what the intent is. We're going to reduce the number of fishing zones to these ecologically based zones. They will be sensible and understandable. We want to make sure that anglers in this province have an understanding of that and

have confidence in what they're doing, so that when they go out with their family, as the member does, and enjoy the pursuit of angling across this province, they're able, with great confidence and assurance, to know that they are obeying the law and regulations and providing for the conservation of our fish.

### HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. As you well know, we've had dialogue regarding the Stevenson Road interchange in Oshawa over the past months. I'm hearing various things about the timelines for construction, the start of the project and what's happening with Stevenson Road. We've heard it has been delayed for a four-year process. I have since found out that part of the reasoning was to minimize the impact on traffic, and lately I've heard that it has gone to five years. Can you update the Legislature as to what is actually going to take place with the Stevenson Road interchange?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** I am very pleased to let the member know that we are making steady progress on the project he talked about. The Stevenson Road project is about a \$57-million project. It's large, it's complex and it requires various stages of construction. We are ready to award the contract to start construction on this new interchange in Oshawa, pending, I think, one final acquisition of property; 20 of 21 properties have already been acquired. We are moving ahead with this project.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I just want to commend the members for an excellent question period. We moved along nicely.

### PETITIONS

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to be recognized first for a change.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government has announced in their budget that they are delisting key health services such as routine eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services; and

"Whereas abandoning support for these services will place greater demand on other health care sectors such as physicians, emergency wards and after-hours clinics; and

"Whereas no Ontario citizen should be denied access to necessary medical care because of lack of funds;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"To reverse the" reckless "delisting of eye exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic services and restore funding for those important and necessary services."

I am pleased to support and endorse this on behalf of my constituents of Durham.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition regarding the Credit Valley Hospital from a group of residents in the Lisgar area, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I thank, especially, Susan Ksiezopolski and Joan Hogens of Lisgar. I'm pleased to sign this petition and ask Nathan to carry it for me.

### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the current government has proposed province-wide legislation that would ban smoking in public places; and

"Whereas the proposed legislation will also prohibit smoking in private, non-profit clubs such as Legion halls, navy clubs and related facilities as well; and

"Whereas these organizations have elected representatives that determine the rules and regulations that affect the membership of the individual club and facility; and

"Whereas imposing smoke-free legislation on these clubs disregards the rights of these citizens and the original intention of these clubs, especially with respect to our veterans;



"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario exempt Legion halls, navy clubs and other non-profit, private or veterans clubs from government smoke-free legislation."

I affix my signature in support.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm very pleased to present this to Madison.

#### VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present yet another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many volunteer fire departments in Ontario are strengthened by the service of double-hatter firefighters who work as professional, full-time firefighters and also serve as volunteer firefighters on their free time and in their home communities; and

"Whereas the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has declared their intent to 'phase out' these double-hatter firefighters; and

"Whereas double-hatter firefighters are being threatened by the union leadership and forced to resign as volunteer firefighters or face losing their full-time jobs, and this is weakening volunteer fire departments in Ontario";—and indeed my riding—"and

"Whereas Waterloo-Wellington MPP Ted Arnott has introduced Bill 52, the Volunteer Firefighters Employment Protection Act, that would uphold the right to

volunteer and solve this problem concerning public safety in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the provincial government express public support for MPP Ted Arnott's Bill 52 and willingness to pass it into law or introduce similar legislation that protects the right of firefighters to volunteer in their home communities on their own free time."

I'm pleased to present this petition to Trishaala and sign it on their behalf.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I'm pleased to present a petition as well. I misplaced my glasses, so I might have a little struggle here, but anyway, we're going to give it a go.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

**1550**

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I affix my name to this petition.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** It's a pleasure to rise today and petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly about the Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements.

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I sign this petition and I give it to Derek to take to the House.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget broke the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To ensure that all of the McGuinty government's tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum."

I affix my name in support.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Here are some of about 45,000 names that are on petitions in the province today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to sign this and present it to Madison, once again, to present to you.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'll sign this petition and thank my aunt Jane Rodgers and cousin Andrew for bringing it into my office this morning.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Yet another petition on behalf of the people of Durham.



"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Federal Income Tax Act at present has a minimum amount of medical expenses for which a taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit;

"Whereas the health and medical expenses of every citizen in the province of Ontario, great or small, affect their overall net income;

"Whereas the Ontario Liberal government moved in their 2004 budget on May 18, 2004, to delist what were publicly funded medical services such as chiropractic services, optometry examinations and physiotherapy services;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Income Tax Act remove the present minimum amount of medical expenses for which an Ontario taxpayer is entitled to claim a non-refundable income tax credit."

I'm pleased to sign in support and present this to Trishaala and endorse it on behalf of the people of Durham.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** This is a very important petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing HRC will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign this and present it to Kaitlin to give to you.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### ELECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES ÉLECTIONS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2005, on the motion for second reading of Bill 176, An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, to repeal the Representation Act, 1996 and to enact the Representation Act, 2005 / Projet de loi 176, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, abrogeant la Loi de 1996 sur la représentation électorale et édictant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I'm pleased to address the implications of Bill 176, the Election Statute Law Amendment Act.

Our governance structure in Ontario is strong, and our governance structure in Ontario works well. What Bill 176 asks Ontarians to think about is whether our governance structure in Ontario could be stronger and whether our governance structure in Ontario could work better.

Most of this bill is about process rather than outcomes. It talks about the creation of a citizens' assembly to look at how we choose our elected representatives. My experience has been that Ontarians—and I've had the good fortune to have lived in three provinces in our country, so I can extend this and say that my experience has been that Canadians—are a politically aware and intelligent people. Trusting a thorough examination of how we choose our elected representatives to an assembly of Ontarians places that question in very good hands, assuming that the quality of input to that assembly also stresses the strengths of the electoral system that has served us well for one and one third centuries.

**1600**

Some measures proposed by Bill 176 are outcomes, and they ought to be supported by all parties in this issue. One such measure is the preservation of 11 northern ridings. Some in this House have called the preservation of representation from our northern ridings to be—and I use the term exactly—political gerrymandering, which seems to me almost like speaking out of both sides of their mouths. We're committed to preserving 11 ridings in Ontario's north. We ran on that commitment, and with Bill 176 we say to the people in northern Ontario, "We're delivering that commitment."

Allowing for the redistribution of seats in southern Ontario along federal lines, Ontario will elect 107 members in this House where 103 now sit. The bill incorporates the provisions of Bill 86, which fixed election dates in Ontario. Is fixing election dates a good idea? We'll find out in an election or two. But one thing we do

know is that the next election won't follow a Magna-style budget. It won't be engineered in a political backroom, and it will be held on October 4, 2007.

Bill 176 will probably be remembered as the political donation transparency act, because much of its impact will be on how political donations are recorded and how they're disclosed. The bill will require real-time disclosure of political contributions. This means that within five days of a riding association or a central party accepting a donation cheque and depositing it in the bank, the identity of that donor will need to be disclosed. This is not meant to stigmatize political donors. Donations are the only source of funds for political parties and their candidates. People contribute proudly to our political system, and their money, their passion, their ideas and their commitment are what make our system strong and vibrant.

But Bill 176 seeks to ensure that money alone doesn't drown out the passion, the ideas and the commitment. It is said that money doesn't talk, it screams. The screams of a hard-core, well-funded and strident political ideology can drown out a broader-based moderate ideology.

Bill 176 will ensure that if a narrow class of donors for whom the donation limits of politics are merely chump change try to drown out any other voice, then we're going to be able to find out who is funding that voice. If it should come to pass that a systematic effort is underway to tap a specific type of donor to give the max to the central party and to give the max to each of the maximum number of riding associations, we will be able to see through this campaign as it's happening. If a group of wealthy people donate the max through their company and through a group of linked or numbered companies that they or their companies closely control, then we'll be able to see their donations come. We'll be able to track their frequency, link the companies and, if it looks excessive, then raise the matter for debate.

Again, this is not to stigmatize a political donation. A political donation is a legitimate way to express your intent, to express your ideals. A political donation is the equivalent of getting out and canvassing.

Politics works on a blend of people and money. You design your campaign based on what you have or what you can get. You need money and you need people. You need them both, because the pizza that feeds our canvassers, the soft drinks that fuel our phoners, the voice messages, the print ads, the brochures, the broadcast spots, the office equipment and supplies, the election signs and all the other things that go with asking a few tens of thousands of Ontario households to make an informed decision all cost money.

Bill 176 is less about catching illegal contributions—because, very frankly, our system in Ontario is comparatively honest—than it is about shining light on improper contributions. Those members and those candidates who cast their nets far and wide and whose fundraising efforts cause people to come together and share ideas need to be rewarded. Those members or parties who narrow their appeal in a fundraising campaign, whose intent is to keep

people apart and divided, and to use the resource of money as a sledgehammer against contrary ideas, need to be exposed.

People will talk a lot about Bill 176 and some of the things it can do. It proposes to elect a citizens' assembly to examine the way we choose our representatives. A point to keep in mind is that the people from this citizens' assembly won't be nominated by the political parties in this Legislative Assembly. They'll be chosen at random by Elections Ontario. This obviously means that those people chosen should properly mirror Ontario society. Some will support this party; some will support another party. Some may be intensely political; others may be unabashedly apolitical. The point is to bring together a group of people who can make an informed decision, expose them to a number of different ideas, have them provide advice to this House, this Legislative Assembly, and come back with a recommendation.

A similar process was followed in the province of British Columbia. The citizens' assembly there proposed a system called the single transferable vote. British Columbians will go to the polls in a number of days, and on May 17 will cast their ballot, not merely for their elected representative, but for whether or not a system recommended by their citizens' assembly, which is, by any admission, complex, should be adopted by that province.

In British Columbia, the rules regarding the adoption of the citizens' assembly recommendations stated that the referendum has to pass by a margin of 60% in 60% of all of the ridings in British Columbia. This is a good measure of check and balance. This says to the province: "If you come up with a recommendation that may be a significant departure from a system that has served us well, then that system should be a clear consensus of the majority of the people in the majority of the ridings before being adopted."

What will happen in Ontario? At this point, we're not there. At this point, Bill 176 proposes forming that citizens' assembly. My advice to them would also be to look at the strengths of the system that has served us well for one and one third centuries and never to forget one very strong advantage of it that doesn't exist in many systems of representation around the world; that is, it allows for the defeat of incumbents.

In the United States, for example, incumbency is a huge advantage. At the state and federal levels, the rate of re-election approaches 90%. Often that's good. As some of my friends in this House who have been here a number of terms—longer than I have—have said, "When the political winds are changing and the government shifts, often some of the good members go along with some of the ones who likely should go, and some of the people coming in on the wave may not deserve to be here as a much as some of those who don't get here."

We in Ontario are going to focus on questions of similar magnitude and, in Canada's largest province, trust our faith to a citizens' assembly chosen from people who watch our system carefully, who see what goes on here



from day to day and in whose judgment I'm sure Ontarians will have a set of strong, workable ideas to debate, come the next election.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to make a few comments on the speaker from Mississauga West, who made clear points on his government's plans for Bill 176.

There are a couple of points I'd like to make. I, for one, won't be supporting this legislation. I don't believe in the Americanization of Ontario politics, and I believe that's what four-year terms, the set election dates, do. I know there are people in our caucus who would probably agree with it, and there are probably other members in the House who would disagree.

One of the reasons I wanted to put on the record is the fact that, as the Prime Minister or as a Premier, I think one of the really nice things a Premier gets to do is to call the election with his advisers and his own decision-making. I've always felt that that was a little intriguing. That kept our politics a little bit different than the politics south of the border, where they're already campaigning for the next election and that's all we'll see for particularly the year and a half ahead of the election: campaign ads, smearing etc.

1610

I, for one, prefer the system that we have in place. I think it has served Ontario well. I don't like to see our Ontario become like a 51st state. That's what I think we're seeing with these fixed election dates.

I'll have a number of other comments to make as we go through this, but that's one I wanted to put on the record to begin with.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I'm going to have a chance to speak more fully as I do the lead for our caucus on this particular issue, but I just wanted to say that, on the citizens' assembly part of what the member talked about, I'm completely in disagreement involving that process. Let me tell you why. There are two reasons.

First of all, I've seen in this Legislature over the last 16 years, as have others who have been here longer than me, that governments do all kinds of things when it comes to changing fundamentally how we conduct business in the province of Ontario, be it the roles of the municipalities, hospitals and school boards, amalgamation of cities etc. We've always had the understanding that the right to do so is a right of Parliament. Parliament is here in order to make those important decisions on behalf of Canadians.

The number two issue on the citizens' assembly is that at the end of the day, I think a government could very much control the outcome of the work that the citizens' assembly should do if you give the power to the minister to set one of those up. If you take a look at what happened in BC, they so much complicated, in my view, the whole issue of, "Should there be reform or should there not be reform, and what should it be?" that, quite frankly, that referendum passing will be somewhat surprising.

What I would argue is that if we're serious about saying we want to have electoral reform, there is a process in this assembly to do that. That is, you refer the matter out to committee. If you want to do a standing committee or a select committee, that's entirely in the purview of the government in this assembly. But you refer it out to committee. You allow members of the assembly who know something about elections and parliamentary reform to go out and canvass across the province, as we do on all legislation, and you bring it back in here for a vote.

At the end of the day, the people of Ontario will have an opportunity to vote. When it comes to an election, they either agree or disagree with what a government has done. That's the best form of referendum: the election date itself, when members agree that we've done the right thing here in this Legislature.

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** The member for Mississauga West said that money talks. I know it does, but in my case it says, "Goodbye."

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Parsons:** On a serious note, we live in a pretty special country. We're one of the few countries in the world—sorry; I didn't mean to start that way, because this is a serious topic. We live in a pretty special country, where literally anyone can say, "I'm not happy with the current system, and I have the right to stand for election." In far too many countries, it literally requires war or civil war. We have that right.

We are also unique, I think, for many parts of the world, in that the elections are affordable for the vast majority of individuals. We have a process in place now that allows donations, and, rightfully so, there's a cap on it from any one organization or individual. A member who is phenomenally rich can't simply buy a seat by putting their own personal money in it to any extent. The system is pretty fair, except that there is concern among the public at times: "This member has been influenced too much by one particular donor," or group of donors, or a particular industry.

I applaud this bill, because this bill will make it transparent. It will be obvious to anyone in the public who has supported the candidate how much they have donated. Rather than waiting a year for it to then be published and for someone to seek it out, this bill will provide that within five days it must be posted on the Internet. Literally now, the Internet is accessible to almost everyone in Ontario, thanks to libraries and schools that provide free use of computers.

I applaud this bill, which I think will reinforce my belief that we have a pretty honest and good group of politicians in this country, people who have come to do the right thing. I believe this is the right direction, which opens up more to the public so they can see where their members' or their candidates' funding came from.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

You have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Delaney:** I want to thank the members for Simcoe North, Timmins-James Bay and Prince Edward-Hastings

for their contributions to this debate. I'm hoping this debate will be as non-partisan as possible, because there are no ideas here that are cast in concrete, and we can truly examine them.

To my colleague from Simcoe North, I share your sentiment that we need a system that makes for a stronger Canada and not a pale imitation of the United States; I fully agree with you. I'm hoping that the citizens' assembly doesn't recommend something that reminds us more of the United States than of a parliamentary democracy.

To my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, Bill 176's purpose is in part to ask if we are serious about having electoral reform. It doesn't assume we're going to take apart our existing system; it simply asks, what are the alternatives? Let the people come forth with an idea that they feel is an alternative to what we have now, let's debate it and then vote on it, and let the best idea win. One option has always been to stay with the status quo.

To the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, I think his money speaks the same language as mine. Having been raised in Quebec, my money mostly says, "Adieu." He noted, however, that one attribute of democracy in Canada, not just Ontario, is that you don't have to be inordinately wealthy to run. In fact, when one looks around the chamber here, one finds fairly few people we can look at and say, "Aren't the members from this, that and the other riding terrifically wealthy?" In fact, most of us are as average as the people we represent, and most of us fairly represent the spectrum of Ontarians who send us here to do their work, build Ontario and make it strong.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 176, which is An Act to amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, to repeal the Representation Act, 1996 and to enact the Representation Act, 2005.

This bill basically covers four components. It provides for fixed election dates for provincial general elections. Bill 176 would also authorize the selection of representative bodies of electors to consider specified matters relating to democratic renewal. It amends the Election Finances Act to require disclosure of certain political contributions. When a contribution exceeding \$100 is made to a registered political party or a registered leadership contestant, the chief financial officer must file a report with the Chief Election Officer within five business days after the contribution is deposited, and the Chief Election Officer in turn publishes the information on a Web site. Failure to file the report is an offence that may result in a fine up to double the amount of the unreported contribution. I know that Ted Arnott, the member from Waterloo-Wellington, has a private member's bill which takes that idea and expands upon it. The fourth part of this bill is that it amends the Representation Act, 1996, which sets provincial boundaries in line with federal electoral boundaries, and instead would maintain 11 northern ridings and increase the number of southern

ridings to 96. I would like to discuss that point to begin with, and if I have time, I'll come back to some of the other points.

The one I would like to focus on is maintaining 11 ridings in northern Ontario. Just last week, I went on a northern road trip. I left from Muskoka at 6:30 a.m. on a Monday, headed north and made my way up to the northwestern Ontario municipal conference in Kenora by road. I went via Sudbury and then stopped in Espanola and had a meeting there. I stopped in Blind River and had a meeting in Blind River. I stopped in Thessalon and had another meeting there. I made my way through Sault Ste. Marie and on to Wawa, where I stayed overnight and followed Highway 17 through Thunder Bay; had a meeting in Thunder Bay and then stayed overnight in Atikokan; then on to Fort Frances, and then farther on up to Kenora to where the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association conference was going on; then made my way back via Highway 11, coming back to Thunder Bay, stopping in Dryden; stopping overnight in Thunder Bay, holding more meetings there and continuing on via Highway 11; stopping in Longlac and Kapuskasing and staying overnight in Kapuskasing; then farther on, having meetings in Iroquois Falls, Kirkland Lake and Elk Lake before making my way back to Muskoka six days later on the Saturday evening.

**1620**

As the critic for Northern Development and Mines, I can tell you that that trip, for one thing, was very useful for me in terms of learning more about some of the issues on the ground in the north. It also gave me a very real sense of just how huge northern Ontario is. I think that is one of the main justifications for maintaining 11 ridings in northern Ontario. The riding of Kenora-Rainy River, to give you an example, is some 336,783 square kilometres. It's just an immense area. I think that's bigger than three times the size of all the southern Ontario ridings. It's huge.

There are a couple of northern riding which are not all that large, they being Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie. Landmass-wise, they're not that huge. Nipissing is not that huge as well. I know the member from Lanark-Carleton spoke yesterday and was concerned with gerrymandering on the part of the government because they hold seven of the current northern ridings. I think it's safe to say that it's easier for an incumbent to win an election than it is for a new candidate coming along.

**Mr. Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** It depends who it is.

**Mr. Miller:** I hear the member for Algoma-Manitoulin agreeing with that point.

Perhaps what we should have is an independent commission that looks at those ridings so that there isn't gerrymandering. Perhaps the boundaries need to be redrawn so that the sizes are equalized a little bit more and you don't have those fairly small ridings in Sudbury and Sault Ste Marie. As the representative of Parry Sound-Muskoka, which is, I believe, some 15,000 square kilometres, it is a fairly big riding when you're trying to



drive around it and look after constituents' concerns. In fact, just a couple of weeks ago I visited Dokis First Nation from my home. To give you an idea: One way, to have a meeting in Dokis was a three-and-a-half-hour drive. Just getting there and back is seven hours in a day before you start having some meetings. So there are some practical concerns to just the sheer size of the ridings in northern Ontario.

I know the member for Timmins—James Bay is going to speak in a moment. He's a private pilot and does a fair amount of flying around the north. I'm a private pilot. I'm looking forward to having the opportunity, as northern critic, to visit some of the more remote First Nations communities—hopefully this summer. But it shouldn't be a requirement to be an MPP for the north that you also be a private pilot so you can cover the vast geographic area of the riding. I think there has to be consideration given to the vast size of northern Ontario. That's why I am in favour of maintaining 11 northern ridings.

We need to go to the root of the problem, which is that we're seeing declining populations in the north and an out-migration of youth. We really have to ask ourselves why that is happening. Why is the government not addressing that problem? What we need to have are jobs in the north, economic activity in the north to keep the young people there and attract new businesses to the north. I can tell you, having just made my tour of northern Ontario, that northern Ontario is hurting big time.

The trip I did—first of all, it was spectacular scenery most of the way, even though it snowed a good part of the trip. There's beautiful scenery from Sault Ste Marie through Thunder Bay. From Thunder Bay up the coast of Lake Superior is absolutely spectacular. If anybody who hasn't made that trip, I highly recommend that you start making plans and stimulate the economy of northern Ontario. It's absolutely beautiful. There's fantastic variety.

One of the places I visited was Red Rock, on the shore of Lake Superior. Red Rock is aptly named because it is a huge cliff that is red. In terms of the colour of the roads at that point, it feels like you're down in Georgia or something. There's quite a variety.

I met with the mill manager there. The mill is the town in Red Rock. It's a container board mill. If that mill goes, so goes the town. That's the case in many, many, many communities in northern Ontario. You drive into the town, and there's a huge mill, and it is, in most cases, the main employer in the town and it's often the main feature of the town. In Red Rock, they're hurting. The mill was doing very well 10 years ago. Right now they're struggling; they're losing money, I believe. One of the main costs of most of the mills is energy. At Red Rock, 30% of their costs is natural gas. They've been faced with cost increases which are not necessarily the responsibility of this government but which are piling up on them.

We've seen the Canadian dollar appreciate 35% in the last few years. We have the softwood lumber dispute. We have challenges with fibre supply, wood supply, to many of the mills, and I hear, from speaking to northerners, that the Ministry of Natural Resources is often part of the problem.

One of the things this government does have control over—and I certainly hear from many people in northern Ontario that they're very concerned about it—is energy costs. I have to ask myself, what are the local Liberal members doing to deal with these energy costs; what's the government doing? Well, the government is making the situation worse. They have a policy where they're going to shut down the coal-fired electricity generating stations in Ontario by 2007. That's going to be very difficult to do, but they're planning on doing that. As far as the northwest is concerned, it could be the nail in the coffin for many of these mills. What do you think is going to happen to the price of natural gas, in the case of Red Rock, when 25% of the electrical generating capacity of the province switches to natural gas-fired generation by 2007, the easiest thing to do in a quick time frame? Well, the price of natural gas is going to increase dramatically. I say that it'll very much negatively affect these northern businesses, as it will all the people who are paying for natural gas to heat their homes etc. It could be the nail in the coffin for many of these mills. So the government is actually making the situation worse with their policy.

If anything, in the north, we need the reverse. We should perhaps be giving consideration to preferential pricing. At this time, in the northwest, I think they generate about 1,500 megawatts of electricity. They're usually using about 1,100 megawatts. Well, if you shut down the two coal-fired plants in Atikokan and Thunder Bay, you'll lose about half, about 500 megawatts of power. At this point, they have an excess of capacity. If they could pay the real cost of electricity, it would be a real plus for northerners and might attract businesses. Instead, the government is embarking on policies which are going to force up the price of electricity and force up the price of natural gas. We've recently seen them bring in a 12% increase in the price for large industrial users. This is making it very difficult for all those mills that are the central employer in northern Ontario and it's very difficult for the mining industry, which also uses a lot of energy.

I stopped in Atikokan. I stayed there overnight, and met first thing in the morning with their energy committee. They were looking for me to ask a question of the Legislature, which I did shortly after getting back, because they're nervous. They had the Minister of Energy up in Atikokan. He made a speech to the chamber of commerce. He told them that he's planning on shutting the mill down but he's going to somehow magically replace the 90 jobs in that coal-fired generating station. The year 2007 is coming quickly, and they're wondering what the Minister of Energy's plan is to replace those valuable jobs in the coal-fired generating station. They have some interesting ideas that I wish the government would listen to and consider implementing. They'd like to see Atikokan stay open and become a research station for new technologies in making coal cleaner.

You have China opening many, many coal-fired generating stations. A brand new coal-fired generating

station, a Genesee 3 plant, just opened March 1 in Alberta.

1630

In Atikokan, they'd like to see new technologies tested there that help reduce emissions, that help reduce things like mercury from the emissions of the coal-fired plant. They'd like to become a centre of excellence so they can export that technology to other countries, like China. I would say that's worth considering. You could not only maintain those 90 jobs but expand upon those jobs in Atikokan, which very much needs to see that sort of support from the government to maintain some jobs in that area.

While I was up north, Abitibi announced that they're selling the Mission mill in the Thunder Bay area, along with 500,000 acres of land. Obviously they wouldn't be doing that unless they are hurting.

I stopped in Kapuskasing. The day before, Highway 11 had been closed at Kapuskasing. They closed the highway for a couple of reasons: One, to protest the fact that the government hasn't approved a hydroelectric generating station. The group KERRA is behind that. They're trying to get some new hydroelectric generation going and the government is not approving that project. They'd like to see that, especially if they're planning to shut down those coal-fired plants. We know they're going to need electricity. So they closed the highway to protest that. Second, at Opatatika, the mill there is scheduled to close in May. They have concerns in Kapuskasing about the process the Ministry of Natural Resources is following, the fact that there hasn't been full public input into that process, and that's something they'd like to see. They're very determined to try to maintain those jobs at Opatatika.

We clearly see that the government is not supporting the north. That's the root of the problem, and why we're talking about having less representation. There are fewer people in the north because there are fewer jobs. We need to do things to stimulate the economy in northern Ontario, not to shut it down. We also need to support the communities in northern Ontario.

I went to the northwestern Ontario municipal conference, stayed overnight there. I was there for the first session, which was explaining the new funding program from the provincial government to the municipal governments called the Ontario municipal partnership fund. It replaces the old community reinvestment fund. I got to go through the explanation; unfortunately, I didn't get to see the fireworks afterwards. I had to get on the road to find out how the people of northwestern Ontario felt about the fact that in just about every case this government is reducing its support for those municipalities.

A quick list: Atikokan, under the old CRF program, received \$1.6 million in 2004, while in 2008, four years down the road, they're only going to get \$1.4 million; Fort Frances goes from \$3.1 million in 2004 to \$2.6 million in 2008; Kenora goes from \$4.9 million in 2004 to \$3.5 million in 2008; Greenstone (Geraldton), where they so desperately need to attract doctors, goes from

\$4.3 million down to \$3.3 million, losing \$1 million; Pickle Lake goes from \$766,000 in 2004 to \$567,000 in 2008; Rainy River goes from \$578,000 down to \$512,000; Red Lake goes from \$2.1 million to \$1.8 million; Sioux Lookout goes from \$3.5 million to \$2.4 million; Thunder Bay goes from \$25.6 million to \$22.2 million; Ignace goes from \$1.1 million to \$925,000.

I don't know why this government has it out for northwestern and northern Ontario, but it is severely cutting the funding that these municipalities so need.

Look at the other provincial funding program, COMRIF, the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund. That's a Canada-Ontario program. I met with the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls. I can tell you, the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls is not a happy camper. They have a work order on their water system. It has to be completed by December 31, 2005. You'd think that would be a health and safety priority, something the government might want to support. Well, their COMRIF application was turned down, and the mayor is not very happy about it.

In Rainy River, they can't build a house because they have an environmental caution in place. All the other municipalities in the Rainy River area were stunned when Rainy River's COMRIF application was turned down. They couldn't believe it. Obviously a health and safety concern—turned down. Thunder Bay's application was turned down. I read a clipping in the Thunder Bay newspaper with an explanation from the spokesperson from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing talking about how the number one priority was health and safety concerns. If that was the case, I would have thought those other applications I mentioned would be approved. The government needs to reverse the trend that is happening in northern Ontario, and needs to listen to northerners.

I met with a group of people in Kirkland Lake, and they talked about the fact that the federal government has done something that makes sense in Kirkland Lake. They have a great big veterans' affairs building located there. Kirkland Lake is a town that has gone—my numbers might not be exact—from roughly 25,000 down to 8,000. So obviously they have infrastructure, they have houses; everything is there for people to arrive and help solve some of the problems of the north. I think it would make sense for the Ontario government to consider locating a ministry at Kirkland Lake. I'm sure the rent would be a lot cheaper there. The experience of that federal office is that they actually have only a 3% turnover rate in the Kirkland Lake area, so they're doing a great job of keeping people there.

Unfortunately, I'm just about out of time. I did want to hit on some other points, but perhaps I'll do that in my two minutes.

I see the local paper in Thunder Bay talking about what this government isn't doing. There used to be a guarantee that Bombardier would have the first right to build rapid transit, and I see that the McGuinty government is planning to sign a memorandum in Ottawa which



would allow the city to seek tenders from around the world for its \$725-million north-south light-rail transit program. It was an agreement put in by Bill Davis that gave Bombardier the first crack at the job. I was in Thunder Bay, and I can tell you that there are a lot of stores boarded up. They need those jobs in Thunder Bay, and they need the support of this government. If they want to maintain 11 ridings in the north, they need more people in the north and they need to support the north with some real jobs.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just before questions and comments, I draw the members' attention to the members' gallery east, where we have visiting us Gino Matrundola, the member for Willowdale in the 34th parliament. Welcome.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bisson:** I want to thank my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka for touching on a number of issues that are very important to northern Ontario. But here is the point I would like to make in regard to that: One of the basic problems we have in northern Ontario, as in other parts of rural Ontario, is that the number of elected representatives sitting in this Legislature is fewer and fewer as time goes by. Why? Because the population in urban centres is getting larger and larger. There used to be a time in this assembly when the rural vote counted for a majority of what happened inside this Legislature, or certainly had a much heavier say than it has now. What we've got, as an example, is 11 members to represent northern Ontario in an assembly now of 103, soon to be 107. I guess the point I would make is that we need to find ways, if we're really talking about democratic renewal, of giving regions of the province a greater voice in the Legislature so the voices of the citizens can be better heard.

For example, my colleague talked about what happened last week or two weeks ago in Kapuskasing, where KERRA organized community members from around to come and basically scream at the provincial government—that's the best way I can put it. They organized a rally so that the provincial government could hear that there are some serious economic problems in the forestry industry in northern Ontario and they want them addressed. The unfortunate part is, we're always in the same situation. This is no disrespect to my good friend Mr. Miller, but the person who goes out for the PC caucus to tour northern Ontario to deal with the issues and understand better is another northerner.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Don't take that away from him.

**Mr. Bisson:** I don't want to take it away from him, but the point is, we need more southern members, urban members, coming to northern Ontario to see first-hand what is going on so that when we raise these issues in the Legislature there is far more understanding, and with understanding comes solutions.

1640

**Mr. Brown:** I have travelled with the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. He is quite an amiable partner in travel. I kind of wish I had had the opportunity to ride

with him on this trip from Bracebridge to Kenora. I think members should know, one of the important things about that trip is that going from Toronto to Kenora is similar to going from Toronto to the Florida border, to give you some idea of the expanse of this province.

What I really wanted to ask the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka—he was sort of part of a government that reduced northern representation from 16 to 11 seats. Now I think he said, if I heard him correctly here—he might want to clarify this—that his party supports keeping 11 seats in northern Ontario. That isn't the message I heard from other members of his caucus, the member from Lanark-Carleton, for example, who seemed to think that keeping the 11 seats in northern Ontario—which, as a matter of fact, as people would know, had been done in at least one prior redistribution and possibly two more; I'm not exactly clear on that. It had frozen the representation in northern Ontario so that we would have members. I'm sure that when the member gets up to respond, he will clearly state the position of his party on maintaining the 11 seats in northern Ontario. I think it is critical to northern Ontario to maintain its representation, at the very least, in the north. I think the way to do that is for his caucus to support this bill.

**Mr. Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on the speech from the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. Clearly, as the critic for northern development and mines, he takes his job very seriously. In fact, when someone does that kind of tour of the north and visits as many people as Mr. Miller has visited, he gets a good sense of the problems we have in northern Ontario.

There are a couple of things I wanted to put on the record. He mentioned, "What can the government do?" I'm already disappointed in this government's position on the expansion of Highways 11 and 400. The minister now responsible for northern development and mines was a strong advocate when he was in opposition. He read petitions continually; he demanded that both of those highways be expanded to four lanes. Of course, the Progressive Conservative government under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves responded to that and put in the largest four-lane expansion in the history of this province in northern Ontario.

Since then, there have only been a couple of small contracts on Highway 400 and Highway 11. I am really disappointed in the Dalton McGuinty government, and particularly in the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, because they have not responded to that. They've been in power for 18 months, and we haven't seen the contracts allocated. As far as I'm concerned, that's one area, for public safety and for economic development, that the government of Ontario could do a lot for, particularly as they screamed so loud when they were in opposition.

I didn't really get a chance to put my second point across, but I just wanted to point out that this member works extremely hard, not only on behalf of his constituents in Parry Sound-Muskoka, but on behalf of all

Ontarians, and as a strong critic for northern development and mines.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I'm going to thank my colleague Mr. Bisson, who is going to do the leadoff for me today as the democratic renewal critic, because he's just—

*Applause.*

**Ms. Churley:** That's you, clapping for yourself.

Of course, I've asked him to say certain things on my behalf, but he's got a lot of his own things to say as well, as a former critic in this area.

New Democrats have been interested in reforming the system for some time. Several years ago we did a whole consultation around moving to some form of PR, proportional representation. That is still our position, and the law reform commission recommended a specific form: mixed-member. One of my major interests in changing the system is getting more women—and, I should add, visible minorities, aboriginals—into this Legislature. I work with Equal Voice. It's a non-partisan group that women members from all three parties sit on and its goal is to get more women elected. In this Parliament right now, in 2005, we still only have 22% women. New Democrats have an affirmative action system that goes a long way. We always do better, proportionately, than the other parties, but what's needed is that along with a change in the system—and we've seen it happen in other jurisdictions. So that is a major interest of mine.

I have to say, being a northerner myself—even though I represent downtown Toronto proudly, I come from Labrador—I certainly understand the concerns of the north. But I have to speak up as well for the concerns of Toronto, because everybody loves to bash Toronto. It's everybody's favourite pastime. But let me tell you, there are times when people also don't have a clear enough understanding of the difficult issues facing us in our cities these days. Let's keep it all in perspective and stand up for all of our constituents everywhere.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Miller:** Thank you to the members from Timmins-James Bay, Algoma-Manitoulin, Simcoe North and Toronto-Danforth for adding their comments.

One area I didn't really get a chance to talk much about in my 20 minutes was democratic renewal and the citizens' assembly that is a part of this bill. I just wanted to go on the record as saying that I think the points made by the member from Lanark-Carleton yesterday, who I see has joined us, and the member from Timmins-James Bay, who's going to speak in a moment, that we should use the collective wisdom of this place and the experience of members who have been here and establish a select committee—there's no reason why that couldn't be done right now to look into changes to this place. I believe we need to look more at fiscal responsibility as well. That's one of the responsibilities in this place that has become removed from MPPs. I think we need more input from opposition.

From my little trip around the north—it was 3,700 kilometres in 43 hours in the car—I note that the Trans-

Canada Highway is not much better than a side road in some places. I believe we need a long-range, non-partisan plan for making a Trans-Canada Highway right across this country that's four lanes and that it absolutely involve the federal government, because it's not something that can be done solely by the provincial government.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Highway 69.

**Mr. Miller:** I note that the member from Simcoe North brought up Highway 69. It's true that when the member from Sudbury was in opposition, that was his main issue. There wasn't a whole heck of a lot of construction on that section of highway as I drove up to Sudbury. There's a little bit started right at Sudbury, but otherwise not too much progress has been made in the almost two years the government has been in power.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr. Bisson:** I've been looking forward to this opportunity all afternoon—as a matter of fact, longer than that. I want to say that an hour is not going to do it. There is so much to say on this particular issue that, quite frankly, we could revert to the old rules where a member took the floor, and ceded the floor when the member, he or she, was done their speech. But I will do the best I can. I have an hour and I will try to rise to the challenge.

I want to say that the first question we have to ask ourselves under this bill is that we're amending the Election Statute Law Amendment Act, which deals with a number of things. It deals with fixed-date elections; it deals with the issue of election disclosure as far as money; it deals with the issue of whether we should change the electoral process that we have in the province; and it also deals with the issue of the number of seats in northern Ontario remaining at 11, such as it is now.

Let me just first of all put this question forward—and I know some friends of mine will disagree and other friends will agree: Does the current system work perfectly well? First of all, no system works perfectly well, I will be the first to admit. Does this system really suit us well? I guess the answer I give to that is, not really. One of the basic problems we have with the current system of electing MPPs and MPs in this country, which is what we call “first-past-the-post,” is that it really is disproportionate, that the number of people who are elected to this place do not represent the major part of our constituency.

**1650**

For example, ask yourself the question, why, if over 50% of our population are women, don't we have 50%-plus of the people in this assembly representing ridings—in other words, MPPs—who are women? There are a number of issues, but one of the issues is the way that the current electoral system works. It is really disproportionate against women when it comes to elections. There are a whole bunch of other issues, and I'm prepared to get into that debate at some time when we do refer this matter out to a committee, but the current system does not serve us well. If you look at our Legislatures over the years, we're lucky if 20% to 25% of the people who are



elected to Parliament or elected to this Legislature are women. You have to ask yourself the question, why is that? We know that women are as capable, and sometimes probably more capable than men, in a number of disciplines, and we need to find the answer as to why that doesn't happen. There are various organizations out there that have been putting their minds to this, such as Equal Voice, which makes a number of very good points as to why there is a systemic problem in our system that makes it that a majority of representatives in this Legislature are men, and those are many. We can get into those details when we get into committee.

I would argue that part of it is our electoral process and part of it is the way that parties choose political candidates. Many times it's big money that wins a riding association nomination, and those who are most well-connected. Unfortunately, in most of the political system, it tends to be the men who are more politically connected within the parties, and that gives them an advantage in being able to get themselves elected in a nomination race.

There are also a whole bunch of other issues about how elections are run. I think, if you look at other jurisdictions around the world, there have been really good steps and very good progress made in other countries to encourage women to run by providing the type of support that is needed to allow them to run and to win, and then once they come to Parliament, to make sure that Parliament is also conducive to the lifestyle of a young mother or young professional woman coming into the assembly. The reality is, we are all different and our needs are different, and I think we need to represent that not only through our electoral system but also in the way that we conduct business in this place.

The other thing that you have to ask yourself in this current system we have is, why is it that, for example, almost 50% of people who live in the city of Toronto or the greater Toronto area are people of colour or visible minorities, and yet when you look at this assembly, that is not the case? We don't see about 50% of people within our communities being elected to this Legislature.

Why is it that in places like where I come from in northern Ontario, we don't see—as a matter of fact, we have never seen an aboriginal person elected to this assembly in the history of this province. There is something wrong. You would think, after 130-some-odd years of Confederation, that we would have figured out how to elect at least one aboriginal person to this assembly. I'll tell you, it's going to be difficult to do in this current system. Often in aboriginal communities, they are not the majority within that particular constituency. They may be a majority within a part of the constituency, but not the constituency itself. There is no outreach on the part of most political parties to activate those people in the aboriginal community to run and to understand our political system and to encourage them and support them in their bid for nominations within their parties. But there is also no mechanism within the electoral act to give an opportunity to aboriginal people to run.

Let me throw something out that's really, I would say, avant-garde. Take a look at what happened in New

Zealand. When New Zealand went through a process of changing the electoral system from what it used to be—first-past-the-post, like Ontario—to what is now a mixed proportional system, they basically set aside a number of seats for the aboriginal community. They said, "We will look at the aboriginal people"—the way I would do it is that I would say, "We will look at the aboriginal people within our province as a constituency, and if that constituency happens to be part in Brantford, Timmins-James Bay, Kenora or Algoma-Manitoulin or wherever it is, it represents two or three seats. You allow elections to happen on-reserve. Also, possibly, you could take a look at giving status Indians who are living in urban centres off-reserve a vote toward an aboriginal candidate to represent them in this Legislature. Who better to do that than somebody who has walked a mile in their shoes?"

I give the example, and I want to publicly thank Monte Kwinter again, who came to Kashechewan with me last week as a result of the flood situation we have there. I give all the credit to Monte Kwinter. He came up, he saw and he understood that there are huge problems in those communities. He said, "My God, how is this allowed to happen?" We had quite a long chat about that.

Imagine if we had had aboriginal people representing those ridings in this assembly over the last 130 years. I would argue we would probably be further ahead. And it's not because we haven't had good representatives. I consider myself an excellent representative of the community of Timmins-James Bay, but who better to do it than somebody who has actually lived the experience?

Our current political system, I would argue, does not properly represent the constituency of Ontario. When we look at this assembly, we should see a mirror of Ontario. As I look at the assembly, if there are 103 seats today, or 107 after the next election, any citizen of this province should be able to look into this assembly and see himself or herself and say, "There is somebody there to speak for me." If I'm a woman, if I'm a person of colour, if I'm from whatever ethnic background or different region of the province, that person should be able to see themselves. This assembly should be a mirror of the population of this province is, as close as humanly possible. Our current system of first-past-the-post makes it very difficult for us to achieve those goals.

I would argue that there are a number of ways we can get closer to the goal of having true representation in this assembly to reflect the population of Ontario. Now, I understand that a lot of this process is rather difficult to go through, because the population doesn't have a lot of confidence in politicians and our political institutions such as Parliament, especially when you see the type of scandal that is going down in Ottawa with the Gomery inquiry. The problem is, we need to find a way to reconnect the voters and give them some confidence in this whole assembly and the whole political process. I think one of the ways to do that is to engage in a very serious dialogue with the public about how we redo the electoral process to make it more representative of what we see. That is the first issue we need to deal with.

Before I get into the various models, the other issue that I think is a failure of this Parliament and our parliamentary system is that a political party today, as it has been for the last 100-and-some-odd years, could get 35% to 37% of the vote, as it did with the NDP, or some 40%, as it did with the Liberals, and even though they do not have 50% of the vote in the general election, they end up with a disproportionate number of seats.

For example, I was a member of the Rae government. I think we got 38% of the popular vote, but we ended up with over 60% of the seats in this assembly. There is something wrong. Back then, the majority of Ontarians did not say, "We want to have an NDP government." What they were saying was, "We would like to have 38% of the assembly made up of New Democrats."

The same thing with the Harris government in 1995 and 1999: The majority of Ontarians did not say in the last election, specifically in Toronto and the amalgamated communities, that they wanted to have a majority Tory government. The vote was 46% or 47% in the first election and somewhere around that in the second election. They said they wanted to have Conservatives in this assembly, but a majority of Ontarians said, "No, we don't want Conservatives; we want New Democrats and Liberals there as well." The problem with this current system is that the Conservative government got elected with a majority even though they didn't have a majority of the popular vote. They came into this assembly and conducted a revolution, to the consternation of a majority of the population of Ontario. What was clear in the 1995 election and the 1999 election was that a majority of people did not vote Conservative; a majority of people voted Liberal or New Democrat. As a result, that should have been factored into any decision that was made in the system.

I know there are friends of mine in this assembly who favour this current system. Yes, if my party was a party that typically won government in the first-past-the-post system, I probably wouldn't mind the system either, because you know at the end of the day that it favours the majority parties. I would like to have it reformed because, from a minority view, I don't see the system working as well as it should.

1700

What can we do to reconstitute the Election Statute Law Amendment Act to really have an assembly that reflects the composition of the province of Ontario?

I'll get into that in a minute, but I want to talk about the process the government has set up in this legislation—which some in my party support, but I don't personally—and that is the whole issue of constituent assemblies. This government is going to form a constituent assembly by going to the chief electoral officer of Ontario and saying, like in British Columbia, "Give me a number of people, randomly, from the electoral list, from the existing ridings within Ontario, who somewhat reflect the composition of those ridings, and we will form a citizens' assembly." They will then turn their attention to the issue: Should there be electoral reform when it comes

to moving to a new election system? Should it stay first-past-the-post or should it move to some sort of proportional representation? And those people will go out and do what they do.

I am opposed to that process, and I'll tell you why. I spoke to it a little bit at the beginning. This Parliament, like all Parliaments in this great land of ours, has the authority to deal with this matter. It's as simple as that, in my view. I look at the Liberal government, the Conservative government before them, and the Rae government, the New Democrats, before that. All these governments, at one time or another, have done something fairly major—a significant piece of legislation. It may be consternating or non-consternating to certain citizens, but at the end of the day, the parliamentary system says that the government, or this House more specifically, has the right to do that by majority.

I believe that if we want to change the electoral system, it should be referred to either a standing committee of the assembly or a select committee to take a look at this issue. I would prefer a select committee, but I'd live with a standing committee. For those who are watching and don't know, a select committee means that the party leaders get together, there's a discussion about wanting to do that, a committee is formed and each of the whips, in conjunction with their party leaders, will put a representative from each of the caucuses—NDP, Conservative and Liberal—on that committee to look at this issue. The people on the committee are those who have an interest and those who will represent the views of the caucus. Their first job would be to do some background research, get briefed by those people who are knowledgeable in election systems—either PR or first-past-the-post—get themselves immersed in the issue, because they want to be caught up, and then go out and do public hearings.

When we did the Meech Lake accord and the Charlottetown accord after that, this assembly put together a standing committee. Under what led to the Charlottetown accord, the province of Ontario went out and consulted Ontarians from one end of the province to the other. There was a report written by that committee. There were New Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives on that particular committee at the time, of which I was a member. We travelled across this province, we came forward with recommendations, and those became the basis of the Ontario position at the negotiating table for the Charlottetown accord.

There's nothing wrong with that process. I would argue that it's best to have a standing committee or select committee do this, not only because Parliament has the right, but politicians and MPPs have an interest. To all of a sudden say we're going to abrogate our responsibility to the public, through citizens' assemblies, to make up our minds about what kind of system we should recommend, I think is basically shirking our responsibilities to a certain extent. I would also argue that it's a lot easier for a government to sway a citizens' assembly, depending on the selection process. That will be seen once you go to the selection process, the final outcome.



If you take a look at British Columbia, I would argue that the Liberal government has really set this up to fail. There's not a real attempt there to take a look at, "Should we stay with first-past-the-post or should we move to proportional representation?" They've complicated the thing. What came back from the citizens' assembly was fairly complex. I think most of us who have read it would sit back and go, "Oh, my Lord." Basically, what we've now got is a pretty complex set of recommendations that came forward which I think could have been made a lot simpler.

The basic question we have to ask Ontarians is simply this: "Are you satisfied, yes or no, with the current system of election? And if you want it to go to a plebiscite"—again, I would not support that; I'd rather that if a party says they're going to do this, they run an election and go out and do it by way of a select committee. But the basic question is: "Are we satisfied as Ontarians with the current system, and, if not, what system do we want to go to?" That's where I want to go next.

What is proportional representation? A lot of people get that confused; I think less so as time goes on. I hear more and more debate out in the general public when it comes to the issue of being able to understand this. There's been more and more debate, provincially and nationally, specifically about what the various forms of PR are and what proportional representation means.

Some people get PR mixed up with a whole other concept, which is the concept of one person, one vote. We don't want to get all of that mixed up. PR is simply this: You have an election; at the end of the election, if a political party gets 45% of the vote, they get 45% of the seats in the House. That's the easiest way to explain proportional representation.

There are different PR models that get you there. Some are more favourable; some, I would argue, not. For example, there's the pure PR system that they have in Israel. Israel has the purest form of proportional representation. You basically have an election; if a vote is, let's say, 47% Likud, Labour or whatever, they get that as a percentage and then they go out and form a coalition with other minority parties to form the government. Italy does the same thing, by the way.

Some people will argue and say, "Oh, PR doesn't work. Look at how unstable it is." I would argue it has been very successful for Israel. Israel could never have survived the 60-some-odd years or 50-some-odd years that it's been there if it had not been for a PR system because, quite frankly, in that particular nation—and, I would argue, with other nations, but very much exemplified in Israel—you need to bring around the table the various different groups that make up the state of Israel, so that at the Knesset there is a working at trying to build some sort of consensus about how to move forward.

We only need to take a look at what has happened over the last three or four years, or longer than that, since George Bush has turned this world on its ear, and we

now have this instability that we have in the Gulf region that—I think he precipitated what's happening currently in Israel, between Palestine and Israel, by giving free licence to do—anyway, that's a whole other debate. The point is, the PR system has allowed Israel to deal with very difficult issues that allowed that state not only to survive but to basically flourish. I think without PR, that couldn't have happened.

If you look at Italy, it's the same thing. People use Italy all the time as an example of why not to do PR. My good friend Michael Colle knows Italy is not a country made up of a group of people who all think the same way—and he laughs. You know as well as I do, if you go to Calabria, you go to Aosta or wherever in Italy, they were different nations for many, many years. Italy is not one homogeneous nation that has existed all of the time.

**Mr. Mike Colle (Eglinton–Lawrence):** They were all Italian city-states.

**Mr. Bisson:** They were all Italian city-states. As my good friend from Eglinton–Lawrence says, they were city-states. If you look at Venice, Milan and Genoa, all of them were basically countries unto themselves. Italy as a nation is rather new. It's how many years, Mr. Colle?

**Mr. Colle:** Since 1867.

**Mr. Bisson:** Since 1867 it's been one country. They came and were born out of many different city-states. How many in total I don't know offhand, but certainly—

**Mr. Colle:** About 30.

**Mr. Bisson:** About 30 or 40. They came together to form a country now called Italy, and they needed to have some sort of mechanism in order to try to bring the various parts of the country together to form a Parliament. They basically went to a pure PR system and, quite frankly, I would argue it worked.

Italy is a very modern nation. Anybody who has travelled there, as I have at least three times—I'll tell you, they'll blow your socks off. It is a great nation, great people. Some of the best cuisine, I might say, the best wines—almost. France has better ones, I must say, as a Frenchman.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bisson:** The south of France. Monsieur, I want to tell you, you travel up to a little place called Tourrettes sur Loup, just north of Nice, there's a wonderful little French restaurant that specializes in beautiful sauces, five mushrooms—oh, I'm digressing—and a wonderful red wine as you sit there and overlook the valley of Vence. Anyway, that's a whole other story.

The point I make is that their pure PR system, I would argue, has allowed Italy to not only survive as a nation, but to flourish. Why? Because that Parliament has been able, with all of the different regions, to find voice in it. So if you're from Calabria, from Aosta, from Florence, from wherever, there is a mechanism in that Parliament to allow the people of those regions, those old city states, to have voice within the Parliament so they can see themselves, and it's quite successful.

1710

There are other models. I would argue that Ontario should not try to go the route of either Italy or Israel,

because it wouldn't work with us. We are used to a system where you have a single constituency with one representative. People want to be able to vote for their representative in their constituency. They don't want to vote strictly off lists. They don't want a system that says, "Which party do you vote for?" then the party selects who their representative should be. People don't want that in this country, and I don't advocate that for a second. I support the concept in our system that says you vote for the representative who you think will best represent you in this Legislature, and there are ways of doing that.

For example, I would argue that Germany, New Zealand and other countries have some of the more interesting models, which are called mixed proportional representation models. Simply said, in one system you have basically two votes. On whatever the date will be in 2007, which I'll talk about a little bit later, the person goes into the ballot box and says, "Who do I want to be my representative in this next Parliament, and which party do I want to form the government?" So the person goes in and says, "I want candidate X and I want party X." At the end of the day, all those members who got elected by people by first-past-the-post—all of the constituency people are elected and they go into Parliament. So, "Let's work this through," and then they tally up all of the votes for the political party.

How does it work? Simply like this: There's an assembly, at this point, of 103 members. You have an election. Let's say that the Liberals got 49% of the votes in the last election. That means that technically they should have around 51 or 52 members in this assembly—whatever the math is. If the Liberals elected 70 members, that 70 ends up representing the 49% that they got in the election. Then for each of the other political parties, you count up their members that were elected directly and you say, what is the difference between what they elected directly and what they need to get in order to meet the proportion of vote they got in the election as a party, and the rest of them come off a list or some other means. At least in that way, what you end up with in the assembly is the will of the people, which is, we should have in this House the majority of the people of the province of Ontario making the decision.

If the majority of Ontarians said, "No, I don't want a Liberal government. I want a PC and New Democratic government"—that's what happened in the last election—the other political parties would have some say. That means that if the government, for example, were trying to shut the mill in Opasatika, as they're doing right now, they would have to get the support of one of the two opposition parties in order to get it done. Quite frankly, our party wouldn't give its support, so I don't think it would go anywhere. Is that the people's will or is that a bad thing? I think it's the people's will, and I think that's a good thing in the end.

I would say that one of the aspects of this bill which I support—but I don't like how you're getting there as far as process goes—is looking at the electoral system. I

would argue that yes, we need to change the electoral system. I agree that the current system does not properly reflect the constituency of Ontario and that it doesn't reflect the will of the people when it comes to the general election. I believe, at the end of the day, that there should be a system of proportional representation put in place for Ontario.

That system, I think, should be consistent with a couple of themes. One is that we need to find a way in the electoral system to make sure that the province and the people within that province are seen in this Legislature by way of demographics: women, people of color, visible minorities etc.

I believe the other issue should be that we should see in this Legislature the will of the people. If the people of Ontario said, "I vote in the next election, in 2007, that a majority of representatives in this House are from two political parties," then there should be a representation within the House. I didn't explain that well. Let me come at it another way. I was getting at it from one side. It didn't work. I've got to go the other way. That is, if the people in 2007 say, "In the next election, I want the NDP to come in at a percentage of 43%," that should not mean to say that they form a majority government. That should only mean to say that they get 43% of the seats in the House. Then it would be up to the New Democratic government to work in co-operation with both opposition parties or other parties that may be formed in order to get legislation through. It doesn't necessarily mean that you have to form coalitions; there are other ways of getting there.

The other issue is that in the election statutes that this bill deals with is the whole issue of dealing with real-time disclosure. Now I'm moving to the other part of the bill. Real-time disclosure deals with donations. Let me just say, generally, I support real-time disclosure; I think it's a good idea. However, I would argue that the whole way that we collect money for political parties in this country, in this province—especially in this province—is really, quite frankly, susceptible to all kinds of problems. We have seen it with the Gomery inquiry. We have a situation where the federal Liberals were giving contracts to their friends in order to get both favour and money back into the Liberal Party. That's wrong.

The other issue—and I think the bigger issue—is that he or she who gives the most money to a political candidate, it is thought, has more influence in the decisions that member makes. It should never put a member in that position. In our party, we have particular rules around that. I'm not allowed to accept donations larger than \$1,000; I can't accept from corporations. There are a whole bunch of different things that we have done in the New Democratic Party to deal with that, to a certain extent, but I would argue that even our rules are not perfect.

I would argue state-paid elections. What does that mean? It means the province of Ontario should pay for the elections, and they should pay for the campaigns of the candidates and political parties. Now people will say:



"Whoa, that's a lot of money. We can't do that. That's a bad idea. You're going to bankrupt the province doing that."

Well, I'm going to answer your question. Who do you think pays for the election now; right? My good friend across the way, you know what happens. You go out and run a \$60,000 campaign. You raise \$60,000. Everybody gives you checks for a \$100 or up to \$1,000, and what do you do when they give you a check? You give them a tax receipt. So Mrs. Smith on the corner who gave you a hundred bucks gets \$75 back from the provincial coffers as a rebate toward that \$100 donation. So who paid for the donation? Was it Mrs. Smith or was it the province of Ontario? Well, 75% of it for sure was the province of Ontario.

It gets better. I then get a rebate from the province of Ontario on the basis of the number of voters who voted for me in the last election. I think my rebate cheque last election was around \$18,000 or \$19,000 dollars. So let's put this into context: I raised in the pre-election, election and post-election periods probably around \$60,000. The election cost me about \$60,000 and I got a rebate like everybody else, because I got more than 15% of the vote. It works out, when you look at the rebate that I got that was paid by the province of Ontario and the tax receipt that everybody got and then their rebate at tax time, that the whole darn thing was paid by the province. There is no other way to cut it.

Let's be real here when we say, "Oh no, we have to allow individuals to contribute to campaigns and the state shouldn't pay." The state is now paying. But the problem is that the system is currently flawed even though the state pays. So I would argue we should do away with all political contributions whatsoever. We may want to have a small ability to be able to allow, let's say, \$100 from individuals counted in some way and taken off your total. Maybe there is something we could do there for those who do want to contribute, or if you're doing a fundraiser or a "meet the candidate," and have a supper for 25 or 30 bucks, whatever it is, to cover your costs there should be some mechanisms that allow that to happen. But we should never put politicians in the position of having to be beholden to a particular individual or corporation because they gave you money. We shouldn't be doing that.

I would argue that what we really need to do is to move to state-funded elections so that the parties get a certain amount of money in order to run their provincial campaigns. A percentage of that could be worked out similar to what they have done federally; I wouldn't argue that was a terrible model. Depending on the results of the last election, it would determine how much you get for this election. The only problem is, you have to have some sort of floor amount of money allowed to parties because you should allow other political parties to form, if that's what the people want, and there should be some mechanism to reflect that. And then individual ridings, as far as candidates, those elections quite frankly should be paid by the state as well. Certainly they're doing it now. What does that do? It allows campaigns to be run basic-

ally on issues of principle, it allows us to make sure that individuals are not influenced by big money and I think it's one of the ways we can bring back some of the credibility we need to get in this institution, when it comes to people thinking and feeling better about the institution of Parliament.

1720

We see now what has happened federally with the Gomery inquiry. I'll tell you, when I first saw that come out, my initial reaction, like most other people's, was, "Oh, my God." But what I really thought was, "There we go again. We're all going to be painted with the same brush." Because there were a couple of bad apples in the bunch—probably more than a couple, as it now appears from the Gomery inquiry—a majority of federal politicians, provincial politicians and municipal politicians are seen as dirty and, quite frankly, probably rated somewhere below lawyers or used car salesmen; you know the old jokes about people's confidence in particular people.

That's really sad, because I think that gives bureaucrats and business much more influence on what happens within Parliament. I think it's important for people to have confidence in their elected officials, and I think it is important for them to hold us accountable. To do so, I think, allows good decisions to be made. One of the things that I think we need to do is take the influence of money out of Parliament.

Within the bill, we deal with the issue of real-time disclosure. I want to say again that I'm in support of real-time disclosure. But you know as well as I do that you can drive a Mack truck through the loopholes this bill creates. Yes, it's going to allow for real-time disclosure for political parties. Basically, within five days the Chief Election Officer of Ontario will have to report on the Internet any donation over \$100 to a political party. That's a good thing; I haven't got a problem with that. But I can take a \$1,000 donation in my riding and you would never know about it under this system, and then that money could be funnelled back to the party—something that already happens.

We know that over 30% of money that is raised for political parties comes through riding associations; it doesn't come directly to the political parties. About 70% of the money comes—well, not even 70%, because part of it comes by way of rebates and the other part comes by way of donations to the political party. But on average at least 30% of the money that goes to Liberals, New Democrats and Conservatives at the central party level comes from riding associations.

So what we're going to do if we have real-time disclosure for donations to leadership candidates or donations to a political party—if I want to hide a \$1,000 contribution, all I have to do is give it to a riding association and then the riding association transfers the money over to the party and there is no real-time disclosure. If you really want to do real-time disclosure, you would have to make it for all methods of contribution, including riding associations.

I understand there is some difficulty with that, because most of the money we get in our ridings is from people

who give us 50 bucks or 100 bucks during an election or post-election. That's where most of our money comes from, and it would be a fair amount of work to get all that done in time under those particular rules. Riding associations don't have full-time staff, as the provincial parties have, to deal with making sure that real-time disclosure can happen, and I understand that—I've been holding this water for a while; I figured it was about time to take a sip. I was actually thinking about a nice little white wine, but that's another story; it would have been very nice.

Anyway, there is still a loophole in this legislation that allows people to give money to political parties without having real-time disclosure. I think the bill is weak in that area, and I think that's something we need to deal with when we get it into committee.

One of the issues in this bill that I support—there is an issue we need to basically work through, because the bill doesn't deal with part of my concern; that is, in the last election the government committed to northerners, as we did, that if either Liberals or New Democrats got elected, we would guarantee there would be at least 11 ridings in northern Ontario when elections happened. I give the government credit: They've held that promise. It's one of the few promises you've kept. You're saying, "Yes, in northern Ontario there will be 11 ridings," and I think that is a good thing.

However, we still need to have some kind of mechanism in order to adjust boundaries based on what happens with the shifting of population. We have some places in northern Ontario where there is an increase or decrease in population. We need to be able to find ways to deal with adjusting the boundaries somewhat so that the constituency size and the constituency populations are evenly distributed. If we don't do that, we could end up in a situation where one particular constituency, let's say Sudbury, could have 20% more constituents than a riding that is more rural, like Algoma-Manitoulin. You need to have some sort of mechanism to make sure that we have a certain amount of equity when it comes to the number of people we represent within our constituencies.

The real thing we have to deal with—I see my good friend the clerk looking at me, and she's going to know what I'm talking about—is how we service these darn ridings. I listen to my southern colleagues—and I have nothing against my southern colleagues—but especially the Hamilton, Toronto, Oshawa, Burlington and Mississauga people will sit here in the afternoon and say, "Oh, there's a really good meeting in my riding that I've been invited to. I think I'm going to go tonight," and off they go to the particular event; or on Saturday, "Oh, I've got to go to three or four different meetings or events in order to cover off the requests made by constituents when it comes to me attending particular events or meetings."

God, I wish I had the ability. I, like Mr. Brown, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Gravelle and Mr. Ramsay, represent a very large geographic riding. My particular riding is larger than France. That's just the reality. I'm a pilot, but I didn't learn how to fly just because I have a larger riding; it's something that I wanted to do. I basically

learned how to fly to be able to get around my constituency. I have seen on one weekend—last weekend I think it was; not this one, the weekend before—it was Attawapiskat one day and Moosonee the next. That's 2,500 kilometres. How do you cover that off? There aren't not even any roads, for God's sakes.

Here's my basic problem—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** With your plane.

**Mr. Bisson:** My plane, yes. But a member should not have to have a plane to service his or her constituency. That's my issue. That's my point. All I'm saying is that the unfortunate position all of us northern members with large geographic ridings have, and also like the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, is that you get, on a particular Friday or Saturday, 10 or 15 requests to attend meetings with municipal councils, organizations, individuals in your riding, and you've got to say no to 90% of them because that weekend is the Timmins weekend, so I'm not going up to Kap or Hearst. Next weekend is my James Bay weekend, so I'm not going down to Highway 11. Next weekend is my Highway 11 weekend. Well, Timmins and James Bay are going to have to wait three weeks.

People are understanding in constituencies like ours. I have to say that my constituents, as all constituents across the north, are very understanding on the issue and understand at times that they have to wait three weeks for a meeting. But the point is, we have not figured out within these large geographic ridings how we can properly support our constituents.

I will make a couple suggestions on this debate. One is, we need to deal with money. We have to have enough money in our global budgets to be able to properly serve our constituencies. I should have the ability to have a staff person on James Bay with travel money so that, as today, when I got a call from the chief at Kashechewan because of yet another issue stemming out of the flood that both Monte Kwinter and I went to visit, they would be able to get there and help them deal with that particular issue, or if there is a challenge in Attawapiskat having to do with the school closure, he or she would be able to go there, and, I would argue, be an aboriginal person who speaks Cree. But I have no money to do that, because I'm treated like every other member in this assembly, to an extent. Yes, I get a little bit extra. What is it? I think it's about \$30,000 extra because I have a northern constituency compared to a member in Toronto. But I can blow that in charters in half a year. If I can't take my plane on Friday because it's snowing—I'm not IFR-rated and I don't feel like killing myself in a snowstorm—I've got to charter. That's \$6,000 to get to Kashechewan and back. There goes my \$30,000 pretty quickly. Those are the kinds of choices you're having to make as a member. I would argue that we need sufficient budgets in order to deal with having staff in our constituencies so that we can properly service our ridings.

In the riding of Timmins-James Bay, about 50% of the population is in the city of Timmins. There are a lot



of requests on that particular constituency office over the years, and it takes up most of my staff. I have another staff person on Highway 11, but when we inherited the James Bay part of the riding, I had no room in my budget to be able to deal with that. I would argue that you have to deal with global budgets so that you have a sufficient amount of staff and staff travel budgets to properly service your constituency and give them the kind of supportive staff they need, be it an office or computers or whatever they need to be able to do their jobs, and no, not cellphones in the James Bay, because they don't work except for Moosonee and Moose Factory. Black-Berries don't even work there, so let's not even ask for that.

1730

The other thing, I would argue, that you have to do is give the member some ability to travel within the riding. I have a proposal I want to make to the Board of Internal Economy, which I can't talk about in this Legislature, but will anyway; that is, we as northern members should not have to charge our charters to our global budgets. It's crazy. I have to use the extra \$30,000 I get in my constituency budget—

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** It's \$30,000?

**Mr. Bisson:** An extra \$30,000 is what I get—wow!—and I've got to operate a second constituency office in Kapuskasing with additional staff that costs me \$100,000. So I'm really ahead of this picture. Don't get me going, Norm. Don't tease the bear. He might be a teddy bear, but he gets pretty vicious sometimes.

I should not have to charge my charter travel or my travel on an airline, if I'm taking Air Québec into a community, to my global budget. As with the federal government, that should be allowed to be charged to travel points. We get 64 travel points, as members, to travel in Ontario. I should be able to say, "All right, my travel is going to be to Attawapiskat," and I just use one point there and back. That's how it should be treated, not against my global. Quite frankly, that's what the federal government does.

The other thing we need to take a look at, I think, in order to deal with how we service these large constituencies, is figuring out some way to better utilize technology. We are fast approaching the time when the penetration as far as access to the Internet is getting much better and we need to take a look at technologies through the Internet and Web-based technologies to give access to constituents in remote areas, and telephone access as well. We need to look at how we can use those technologies a little bit better.

What is the basic complaint of northerners? That's the next place I wanted to go. That is, people in northern Ontario, and I would believe in rural Ontario as well, and southwestern and southeastern Ontario, are frustrated because they feel at times that their voices are not heard at Queen's Park. What's interesting is that they don't point the finger at their local representative. For example, I know for a fact that there are a lot of people in Mike

Brown's riding, as in Timiskaming, as in Timmins—James Bay, as in Kenora—Rainy River, who feel disenfranchised from Queen's Park. But they don't point at Mike Brown and say, "It's all Mike Brown's fault." They recognize that Mike Brown, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, is trying the best he can to represent his constituents in this assembly, and the same thing for Gilles Bisson in Timmins—James Bay or Howard Hampton in Kenora—Rainy River. But they are feeling disenfranchised, and one of the things we need to do is to find a way to basically give people the sense that their voices are being heard here at Queen's Park. One of the ways to do that, I would argue, is through a form of proportional representation that takes that into account.

So I would argue that we need to find ways to give voice to people in rural and northern parts of this province who more and more are feeling estranged and farther away from their provincial government and what happens in this particular assembly. I think that would be well done, if we could do that, in order to really give voice to the people and give them a chance for their voices to be heard here. Again, I just want to say we need to take a look at some of these issues a little bit more seriously, and I would argue we need to do that by committee.

I want to deal with the other part of the legislation, that is, the issue of fixed-date elections. Bravo. I'm one of the members who support that and think it's a good idea. Are there problems in the way that you've drafted it in the legislation? Of course there are. You know as well as I do that the Premier could tomorrow, if this legislation had been passed yesterday, go to the Lieutenant Governor and ask for an election, because it doesn't take that ability away from the Premier. This is a parliamentary system, and under a parliamentary system a House has to be able to rise and fall on a non-confidence motion, as we're seeing in the federal House of Parliament today. So without dealing with those other issues, fixed-date elections is a bit of a funny issue in this legislation. I find myself supporting the concept of a fixed-date election but somewhat critical of the government because they're really not giving you fixed-date elections. If you want to get there, let's find a way to do it that makes some sense.

Why do I support fixed-date elections? Simply this: It takes away the power that the Premier has to basically choose the timing of an election. Let me say, most Premiers have been dead wrong on picking the date of an election. I remember David Peterson. He thought he had it figured out. He said, "We're riding high in the polls and we're going early."

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** He's still with us.

**Mr. Bisson:** Oh, the other Mr. Peterson. That's your brother, by the way.

**Mr. Peterson:** David's still with us.

**Mr. Bisson:** I remember him. I saw him the other day. He was here.

The point is, most Premiers have not had the results they wanted in trying to pick election dates. So the first

point is, it takes away from the Premier the power to try to fix the election to his or her advantage and his or her political party's advantage.

The other thing, quite frankly, is that it is a way of really distracting attention from the work we need to do as legislators. I remember far too well the lead-up to the last election. God, we were in election mode for what, Norm? It must have been over a year. First we had a leadership process where Ernie Eves was elected leader. I bet \$100 that he was going to go a week after the leadership vote. He wishes he had; he's told me that he wishes he had. I would have won my \$100, and he would have done better.

**Mr. Sterling:** I was with you.

**Mr. Bisson:** I know you were with me. You're an astute politician, I must say, Norm.

We went on for a year and a half before we actually went to the polls. We were basically on election watch. What does that mean? It means that about 20% to 25% of my time in the year and a half leading up to the last election, as with all other members in this assembly, was somewhat focused on the riding association and the ability of that riding to be prepared for the election: Have we fundraised? Do we have the right amount of money in the bank account to run the election? Do we have all the proper spots filled out for who will be part of our election team?

My election team during the last election was around 350 volunteers all told. Some worked harder than others, as far as time was concerned, but they all contributed in some way. You have to make sure that your sign chair is still the sign chair you picked three months ago. Things happen. People get transfers or new jobs, a baby comes; all kinds of things happen, and it changes. So I was constantly getting calls from my election planning committee chair saying: "We've got a hole. So and so, who was our head sign person in Opatatika, got a transfer and is moving out of town. We've got to find somebody else. Do you have a name for me?" I'd have to get on the phone or call somebody in the riding association—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** It went on so long that my campaign manager moved to the Cayman Islands.

**Mr. Bisson:** Your campaign manager moved to the Cayman Islands? My lord, I don't want to know what was going on there. I wouldn't admit that. The Cayman Isles is a tax haven.

The point is, we were on election watch for a period of around a year and a half, and it was distracting to the work we do here as members. I think that if it works municipally and it works for school boards to say that there shall be an election every three years and it shall be on a certain date, that is a good thing. I think that's something we should try to aim for. But frankly we need to deal, in the Election Act, with some of the difficulties that are contained in having fixed-date elections; for example, how do you deal with a non-confidence motion in this assembly? It could happen, even though there's a majority. Although it's never happened before,

theoretically—well, it might have happened. It actually happened in Saskatchewan that a majority government lost.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bisson:** Did it happen here as well? A majority government can actually lose a non-confidence vote. It only happened in Saskatchewan, as far as I know. There was a New Democrat who voted against his own government. It's a big, long story. He basically crossed the floor.

**Mr. Sterling:** It was a minority.

**Mr. Bisson:** In 1977?

The point is that you have to have a mechanism in a Parliamentary system to allow the members of the assembly, by majority, to decide if the government should stand or fall. That is one of the basic things in a parliamentary system.

This brings us to the power of MPPs, and that is where I want to end in the last 10 minutes I've got. Let's be clear here: We play a fairly important role in our constituencies. In our ridings, all of us work hard; I don't care what political party we're from. People in our constituencies look up to us, and we, on all sides of the House, work at resolving problems for our constituents. The reality is, we know that the power resides with the Premier and a couple of paid staff around the Premier. I don't care if the Premier is a Liberal, a Conservative or a New Democrat, the reality is, more and more power is being taken away from the members of this assembly and being concentrated in the Premier's office, and that is wrong. That is not what Parliament is all about. Parliament is about members of this assembly being in charge, members of this assembly saying, "Here's the direction we want on this particular matter of public policy. Let's have a real debate, let's refer the matter to committee and let's come back with a consensus, or at least a majority view, of this assembly about what should happen."

What we've got now—I've seen it; I was in government, and most members of this assembly have been in government. What ends up happening is that the Premier, a couple of key cabinet ministers who say, "Yes, boss. Whatever you say, boss. How high, boss?" and a whole bunch of paid political staff around them who don't have to get re-elected, I must add, and do have pensions, unlike MPPs, and probably get paid more than MPPs in some cases—I'm not sore, I'm not bitter, I'm just making a point—make recommendations to the Premier, and then the Premier makes a decision. Then the Premier walks into the caucus room and says, "Oh, here's where we're going," and members of that particular caucus more or less follow behind, because what are you going to do? You're not going to jump offside as a member of the Liberal caucus and criticize your own; I understand that. At the end of the day if your party is doing badly at the polls, it's going to reflect on your ability to get re-elected in your own riding.

1740

The other issue is that you try to go along with the majority of what the caucus says. If 60% of your caucus



says, "We are going in that direction," because the Premier has convinced them, you try to be loyal to your caucus. But you and I know that what we have now is less and less power in the hands of the members. It is basically concentrated amongst a few people within the Premier's office, and I think that's wrong. I think we should find a way to empower members to be able to have a real voice. That's one of the things I like about proportional representation: It makes it more important for governments to listen all to members; not only their members, but members of the opposition.

At the end of the day, if there is an issue—for example, my good friend Mr. Colle will remember the issue of the amalgamation of the city of Toronto. The majority of Torontonians and the majority of people within the affected areas of amalgamation were opposed—76% were opposed—to amalgamation, but basically Mr. Colle and others didn't have a say in it because the Premier had decided that this was where he was going and his caucus had to follow suit. As a result, we've amalgamated the city of Toronto, and I would argue, for what? It's more expensive and it is less representative.

**Mr. Colle:** Now they want to change it.

**Mr. Bisson:** Well, now they want to change it. But my point is, what did we really achieve? We could have saved ourselves a lot of time and money if we had given the ability of members of this assembly to have a greater voice in what happens as far as the end result of amalgamation.

Should there have been some forms of amalgamation? I would argue with my good friend Mr. Sterling, and we're on the opposite side of the political spectrum, that there were cases for amalgamation. The city of Timmins amalgamated many years ago because there was a case to be made for South Porcupine, Whitney, Schumacher and Mountjoy to come together as one city called Timmins. At one point maybe in Toronto there was a need to do that in some areas. But at the end of the day I think there would have been a much different result if we had had a better ability for members in this assembly to have a greater influence over what the end result should have been.

I want to take the last few minutes—I actually went through that part of it a lot quicker than I expected, giving me an extra five what they call bonus minutes—to go back to where I come from, which is northern Ontario, to say a couple of things.

It is becoming more and more, I think, apparent to most people who live in northern Ontario that over the years we've had a very difficult time economically. Some of that has started to turn around, in the mining industry specifically. Mining, if you look at the city of Timmins, is doing fairly well compared to about 10 years ago, but we are increasingly in crisis in the forestry industry. We really need our government, here in Ontario, to work with us in northern Ontario and deal with some of the very pressing challenges that we have within industry. One is the whole issue of energy. It was mentioned by my good friend Mr. Miller the other day that KERRA, a

group that was organized out of Kapuskasing, has a legitimate concern. We have a bit of a difference in philosophy about how they get there and how we get to the solution, but the basic issue is, why should Tembec, in Kapuskasing, pay the price of electricity that it does when you've got power dams on the river, not more than 40 miles away, producing electricity at less than a penny a kilowatt hour? It doesn't make any sense. Knowing that basic electricity is a large part of doing business for many, many plants in northern Ontario—because we are talking pulp and paper plants, we're talking mining processes such as Falconbridge and others, where 25% to 30% of the overall cost is electricity—it gets really expensive to operate as the price of electricity goes up. So we need to have a real dialogue with our provincial government to be able to deal with energy issues for northern Ontario and how they affect the citizens and the industry.

The other issue is the allocation of wood. Je veux dire à mes amis au nord de l'Ontario—on sait que, par exemple, ce qui se passe dans la communauté d'Opasatika est vraiment une situation très dangereuse, non seulement parce que ça va fermer la seule industrie à Opasatika, qui est Excel Forest Products, mais c'est aussi la question de ce que ça veut dire comme précédent pour tout le nord de l'Ontario.

Simplement dit, ça a toujours été le cas dans la province de l'Ontario que les forêts sont les forêts de la Couronne. En d'autres mots, si une compagnie comme Tembec ou Domtar ou Abitibi ou n'importe qui veut avoir l'opportunité d'aller chercher les arbres et faire des produits à travers des scieries ou des moulins à papier, elles ont une entente avec les communautés qui va assurer que le bois qui est utilisé dans la communauté est produit et fini dans la communauté d'où il vient.

Mais ce qu'on a présentement, c'est que le gouvernement a accepté, à travers le ministre des Ressources naturelles, de dire, « On n'a plus besoin de faire ça. Si des compagnies veulent transférer leur bois d'une communauté à l'autre, elles peuvent le faire », puis personne ne va rien dire.

Ce qui est important, c'est qu'on comprend que, numéro un, les forêts sont publiques et n'appartiennent pas aux compagnies forestières—elles appartiennent au monde du nord et de la province de l'Ontario—et que les compagnies doivent avoir une responsabilité de s'assurer que le bois qui est pris dans nos forêts est transformé en produits dans nos communautés les plus proches possibles de la forêt. Je pense que c'est important. Sans ça on va avoir, avec le temps, une réduction d'emplois au nord de l'Ontario comme on n'a jamais vue dans le passé.

L'autre affaire dans toute la question des compagnies forestières, c'est qu'on sait qu'il y a des problèmes dans l'industrie, mais ce n'est pas en permettant aux compagnies comme Tembec, Domtar et autres de créer ce qu'on appelle des « supermills » qu'elles seront capables de trouver une solution à leurs problèmes. Les compagnies nous disent, « On a besoin de faire ça parce

qu'on se trouve dans une situation où il y a moins de bois, et on a besoin de se rentabiliser dans la production avec des usines plus grandes.» Écoute, s'il y a un manque de bois, pourquoi transfère-t-on le bois d'une usine qui va fermer à une autre usine? S'il y a un manque de bois, le bois doit rester dans la forêt pour permettre une régénération plus naturelle dans la forêt. Mais ce qu'on fait dans ce cas-ci, c'est qu'on alloue au bois d'être transféré à une autre communauté, et à la fin de la journée ça veut dire qu'on crée le précédent nécessaire pour une compagnie de dire, « On va fermer un moulin dans la ville et transférer le bois à une autre ville », et c'est quelque chose qu'on ne doit pas allouer.

Je dis au gouvernement, à travers ce débat, que je pense qu'il est important que vous réalisiez que vous avez une responsabilité comme gouvernement de vous assurer de la politique de la province, qui a été en place pendant des années, qu'on respecte que les forêts soient les forêts de la communauté et que ces forêts-là n'appartiennent pas aux compagnies forestières.

La semaine passée, j'ai posé ici à l'Assemblée une question au premier ministre, et il a accepté de rencontrer les représentants de la communauté faisant affaire avec cette question. J'espère qu'à un temps cette semaine, on va avoir une date fixée pour cette rencontre mais j'espère que, quand on vient se rencontrer avec le premier ministre, il va avoir l'oreille ouverte et qu'il va être préparé d'entrer dans un dialogue avec nous pour nous permettre de trouver des solutions pour nos communautés. À la fin de la journée, c'est ça qui est le plus important.

Again, I thank members for giving me the opportunity to have this time. I say to the government that there are parts of this bill that I am generally supportive of. I have some questions about how you are going to get there. I look forward to this bill going to the committee, where we are going to be able to deal with these matters much more fully.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peterson:** C'est un grand plaisir de me lever aujourd'hui, d'entendre notre ami de Timmins-Baie-James et d'entendre la belle langue, parce que c'est la langue natale de beaucoup d'Ontariens. C'est un grand plaisir de se souvenir que l'Ontario est une province bilingue.

When I went across the province this winter and spring to do the trails consultation, it became obvious that the dynamic of northern Ontario has changed dramatically and that our bill on democratic renewal is very important, because what the fundamental part of this bill says is that we are trying to make everyone equal, each vote counting the same, and that that is the essence of democracy, not who has the deepest pocketbooks.

If you look at the way the economy has changed in northern Ontario, from times when it was dominated by huge mines and huge forest companies that employed a lot of people, what you see now is a huge amount of mechanization and no people. That is part of the depopulation of northern Ontario. Hence, we look at new strategies. We look at strategies of how we can put tourism

into there. We look at strategies of how we can build small enterprises and the service industry. It is part of democratic renewal that we take the emphasis off the big dollars. For the people living in northern Ontario, Toronto seems like just a huge megalopolis, a huge revenue generator, a huge source of wealth, and they're intimidated by it. But this democratic renewal will give them a chance to understand that their vote, although backed by less of an economic force, is equal to the votes in southern Ontario. I think it does a great thing to equalize and to tell the people of northern Ontario how special they are to Ontario.

1750

**Mr. Sterling:** I enjoyed the remarks of my friend from the north. I don't think any one of us has an objection to having 11, 12 or whatever number of seats you want in northern Ontario. But what we should have is a process to establish where boundaries are going to be and how many seats there should be. Let's establish an electoral boundaries commission here at the provincial level and strike the boundaries.

If we want an average of 95,000 per riding, which would be the number we would need in order to have 11 ridings legitimately in northern Ontario, let's have it. But that would mean that we would have about 110 seats in the south. I have no objection to having 11, 12 or any number of seats in northern Ontario, but that should not be decided in a government piece of legislation on the basis of an election promise. That's gerrymandering, and we did away with that about 20 or 30 years ago. Twenty or 30 years ago, democratic reform included in it an unbiased electoral boundaries commission to decide where the boundaries should be placed in an election in Ontario.

Mr. Brown was quite wrong in saying that I didn't want 11 ridings in the north. If that is the desire of the government, God bless you. But let's have an electoral boundaries commission decide on where those boundaries should be. You can't do this in a piece of legislation without looking at the population shifts and doing it fairly amongst all people in Ontario, whether they're in the north or in the south. Some of the ridings in the south are larger than the ridings in the north, and they have to be treated the same as the ridings in the north.

**Ms. Churley:** I must say, that seemed to make sense to me. It seems as though everybody is agreeing about the 11 seats up north, but there are some questions around process that are very important.

I want to congratulate my friend Gilles Bisson, who managed to fill up that hour. I could tell he had a lot more to say. He was just beginning.

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** He could have gone on for days.

**Ms. Churley:** He could have.

I thought he gave a very good presentation, not just on the issue up north and the need for more seats, but a good overview of the democratic deficit we have in this country and this province. It really is. Just look at what's going on with the Liberals in Ottawa now: the scandal, and the years and years of being able to get away with



that. Look at all the reform that's needed, so that governments of every stripe on every level are more transparent in the way they handle the public purse, number one.

I believe that there are some aspects to this bill that are needed. I know that we dragged the government kicking and screaming into real-time disclosure. I remember asking question after question. I remember when I brought my real-time machine in one day, and they've now come forward with that. The problem is that it's cherry-picking. We need to have the whole enchilada here. I must be hungry: cherry-picking, enchilada. We need to be looking at the entire nature of what kind of reform we need. The minister responsible said there will be a process. What we're insisting on is that that process involve the opposition completely, that decisions are made about the secretariat and how people are going to be picked to decide on all of those things. We all have to, on a non-partisan level, deal with the reform of the democratic system here in Ontario.

**Mr. Colle:** I certainly prefer the member from Timmins—James Bay's gourmet taste to the member from Toronto—Danforth's, although there are some great restaurants on the Danforth. But enchiladas are not among my favourites.

Anyway, I would just like to say that this bill doesn't really deal with some of the fundamental, core issues. One of the core issues I find is that you could put the provinces of Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia into the city of Toronto: again, Saskatchewan with 995,000; Prince Edward Island, 137,000; Newfoundland, 517,000; Nova Scotia, 937,000. We've only got 21 seats here. In those provinces, they've got about 200 members provincially.

The previous government talked about how representation was bad. "Too many elected officials; get rid of them." The public needs good representation. The present system doesn't reflect the public's needs, never mind the geographic needs my friend talked about, which are real. There is also diversity. In the city of Toronto, you can go from street to street and there are totally different, dramatic needs. From the poor in the Jane Street corridor to Lawrence Heights in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence to St. James Town, wherever you go, dramatic needs aren't being met with our present electoral system. It's really doing a disservice to democracy the way it's structured right now. Unless we start to come to grips with those problems of representation that exist not only in the north but that exist all over, it doesn't do democracy a good turn, the way we are looking at things right now.

This bill, to me, is a small step. Let's take some giant steps. God forbid we should take some chances for better democracy, better representation for a change.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Timmins—James Bay, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Bisson:** I want to thank all my colleagues: the member from Carleton, the member from Danforth, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

I want to say to my good friend Mr. Colle that I agree with him. There are some really larger fundamental issues that we need to deal with when it comes to making sure this assembly reflects what Ontario really is. When it comes to geography, population base, women, people of colour, this Legislature does not represent us.

I think one of the ways that we need to do that is we should refer this matter off to a select committee. A select committee should be charged to look at these issues in some detail and then make recommendations to Parliament, or the Legislature in our case, to be able to deal with some of these issues. I think that in that would be a whole bunch of other issues that we would bring in, not only from representation but also the issue of finance.

To my good friend Mr. Sterling, I only point out that it was your party that got rid of electoral boundary commissions. Under your party, we moved to follow the federal boundaries.

**Mr. Sterling:** We took theirs.

**Mr. Bisson:** We took theirs, but the point is that we ended up following the feds, and I never really agreed with that.

**Mr. Sterling:** It was a commission that recommended it.

**Mr. Bisson:** It was a commission, but here is the basic problem as I see it. The municipal government, we'll both agree, is much closer to the public, and they deal with issues on a pretty darned grassroots basis. The province, I would argue, is much closer to the citizens than the federal government. What we did, by going to fewer ridings in the province of Ontario—130 to 103—was to make each of our ridings larger, more people within our ridings, which made it much more difficult for us to deal with the many more issues we deal with at the provincial level. I look at federal members compared to provincial members, and we deal with far more issues on the provincial level than they do federally. I don't believe that our ridings should be the same when it comes to numbers.

I thank members for time in this debate, and I look forward to the committee that will deal with this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the members for the debate this afternoon. I think it's time that this House adjourned, to be reconvened at 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

# CONTENTS

Monday 9 May 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Nurses</b>	
Mr. O'Toole.....	6879
Ms. Wynne.....	6881
<b>Achievements of Thunder Bay residents</b>	
Mr. Mauro.....	6879
<b>School closures</b>	
Mr. Marchese.....	6879
<b>Hospital funding</b>	
Ms. Marsales.....	6880
<b>School transportation funding</b>	
Mr. Yakabuski.....	6880
<b>Hockey</b>	
Ms. Matthews.....	6880
<b>Fabry disease</b>	
Mrs. Witmer.....	6880
<b>Veterans</b>	
Mr. Brownell.....	6881

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on finance and economic affairs</b>	
Ms. Marsales.....	6881
Report adopted.....	6882

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr. Duncan.....	6882
Agreed to.....	6882

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. McGuinty.....	6882
Mr. Tory.....	6884
Mr. Hampton.....	6885
<b>Nurses</b>	
Mr. Smitherman.....	6883
Mr. Baird.....	6885
Ms. Martel.....	6886

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Tory.....	6888
Mr. McGuinty.....	6888, 6893
Mr. Baird.....	6893
<b>Privatization of public services</b>	
Mr. Hampton.....	6890
Mr. Phillips.....	6890
Mr. Caplan.....	6890
Mrs. Chambers.....	6890

## Children's services

Mr. Hampton.....	6891
Mrs. Bountrogianni.....	6891
Ms. Pupatello.....	6891

## Ontario budget

Mr. Flaherty.....	6891
Mr. Watson.....	6892
Mr. Phillips.....	6892

## Environmental legislation

Ms. Churley.....	6892
Mrs. Dombrowsky.....	6892

## Public transportation

Mr. Kular.....	6892
Mr. Takhar.....	6893

## Refinery closure

Ms. Martel.....	6893
Mr. Bartolucci.....	6894

## Ontario economy

Mr. Milloy.....	6894
Mr. Cordiano.....	6894

## Student literacy

Mr. Klees.....	6894
Mr. McGuinty.....	6895

## Energy conservation

Mr. Prue.....	6895
Mr. Duncan.....	6895

## Grow bonds program

Mr. Oraziotti.....	6896
Mr. Bartolucci.....	6896

## Doctor shortage

Mr. Miller.....	6896
Mr. Smitherman.....	6896

## Animal protection

Mr. Bisson.....	6897
Mr. Ramsay.....	6897

## Sport fishing

Mr. Parsons.....	6897
Mr. Ramsay.....	6897

## Highway interchange

Mr. Ouellette.....	6898
Mr. Takhar.....	6898

## PETITIONS

### Health care

Mr. O'Toole.....	6898
------------------	------

### Credit Valley Hospital

Mr. Delaney.....	6898
Mr. Peterson.....	6899

### Anti-smoking legislation

Mr. Ouellette.....	6898
--------------------	------

### Regional centres for the developmentally disabled

Mr. Dunlop.....	6899, 6900, 6901
Mr. Yakabuski.....	6899
Mr. Brown.....	6900

## Volunteer firefighters

Mr. O'Toole.....	6899
------------------	------

## Taxation

Mr. Ouellette.....	6900
--------------------	------

## Health care funding

Mr. O'Toole.....	6900
------------------	------

## SECOND READINGS

### Election Statute Law Amendment

<b>Act, 2005, Bill 176, Mr. Bryant</b>	
Mr. Delaney.....	6901, 6903
Mr. Dunlop.....	6903, 6907
Mr. Bisson.....	6903, 6907, 6908, 6919
Mr. Parsons.....	6903
Mr. Miller.....	6904, 6908
Mr. Brown.....	6907
Ms. Churley.....	6908, 6918
Mr. Peterson.....	6918
Mr. Sterling.....	6918
Mr. Colle.....	6919
Debate deemed adjourned.....	6919

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Board of Internal Economy

The Speaker.....	6881
------------------	------

### Visitors

The Speaker.....	6886
------------------	------

### Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Winter.....	6886
Mr. Jackson.....	6887
Mr. Chudleigh.....	6887
Mr. Hampton.....	6888

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 9 mai 2005

## DÉCLARATIONS

### MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

#### Politiques fiscales

<b>fédérales-provinciales</b>	
M. McGuinty.....	6882
M. Tory.....	6884
M. Hampton.....	6885

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

### Loi de 2005 modifiant des lois

<b>en ce qui concerne les élections,</b>	
<b>projet de loi 176, M. Bryant</b>	
M. Bisson.....	6917
M. Peterson.....	6918
Débat présumé ajourné.....	6919





No. 142B

N° 142B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 9 May 2005**

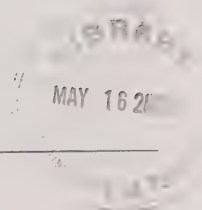
**Lundi 9 mai 2005**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 9 May 2005

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 9 mai 2005

*The House met at 1845.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 118, An Act respecting the development, implementation and enforcement of standards relating to accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings and all other things specified in the Act for persons with disabilities, when Bill 118 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of the vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue):** Mr. Duncan has moved government motion number 370.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** The McGuinty government has worked very hard to change the atmosphere around this place. We have tried to open up the Legislative Assembly to fuller debate and discussion. I remember eight years of having legislation rammed through with no consideration of the need for debate or public hearings. As a result, I do not take the use of time allocation lightly. So let me express my regret that we have been forced to time-allocate on a bill which will make Ontario one of the most accessible societies in the world.

This is legislation that is needed now. We need to make bold moves now to remove barriers to accessibility. Every Ontarian must have the opportunity to participate in society to their fullest potential, a goal that I am sure all members agree with. This is a bill which should rise above partisan games and theatrics, but it is exactly those games that have led us to this time allocation motion.

I received a copy of a letter from the member from Burlington, and I must say I am extremely troubled by his remarks. He indicates how willing he has been in supporting this legislation and explains why he will be

filibustering this bill. In the letter, the member for Burlington explains, "the PC caucus would support the bill, that we would ensure speedy passage by agreeing to only one day of debate (instead of the customary three days)."

The opposition member is doing us no favour. Third reading debate is the final approval of a bill. It comes after a full debate on the principle of the bill. It comes after dozens of hours of committee hearings. Third reading is the last chance for parties to express their final thoughts on the bill. That is why the majority of government bills receive less than three days of debate on third reading and why most never receive more than three hours. This is especially true for a bill that all parties support. I would be happy to send over to the member the time allocation motion he applied to his Bill 124, a bill which allowed for less time on public hearings, less time on clause-by-clause, and which allowed for only one day of third reading debate, not to mention a bill that was not supported by all members of this House or members of the disabilities community.

The member for Burlington states in his letter that he and his party have pushed for the bill to be debated after the budget is tabled, and he indicates that the Liberal budget will result in funding cuts to programs and services for the disabled community. I would be interested to know how the member could state this. I would very much hope the member is neither speculating about something he knows nothing about nor fearmongering for political gain. This government is pushing this bill forward, as we are committed to the disability community. We are fixing what that government, the Conservative government, didn't do. It was their leader who promised these changes 13 years ago, changes which their leader refused to deliver.

**1850**

Why would we stall this legislation any further? If there is a problem with the budget, deal with it when we debate the budget. The games must stop and we should pass the bill. We have been attempting to get agreement to one night of third reading debate for the past several weeks on a bill that all three parties agree to. We have attempted to ensure this debate so that the community, which needs considerable time to prepare and wants to be here for the vote, can be here. To suggest that it has to come after the budget is in our view false. The debate should proceed and be finished tonight and we should vote and pass this bill, which we have waited some 13 years for in Ontario, since the leaders of all three political parties made their commitment.

I am especially proud to participate in this debate and pay tribute to my colleague Dr. Marie Bountrogianni for her work on this bill. I think this is a signal event. I think this will make Ontario the lead jurisdiction probably in North America, if not the world, when it comes to accessibility, removing barriers, preventing new barriers from starting. It's a remarkable achievement that my colleague was able to bring together disparate numbers of groups to support this bill. I reviewed the transcripts from the hearings and saw all of the various communities that participated, and when I say communities, I mean representatives of the businesses community, representatives of government, representatives of the disabled community, all of whom have applauded this government's bill and all of whom support the bill.

The time to pass it is tonight. The budget on Wednesday, frankly, will have nothing to do with this. It is a spurious, spurious debate. This bill is about process into the future. The Conservatives have never supported an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This is their last chance to try and prevent it. The member filibustered unnecessarily in committee, dragged out time unnecessarily over the objections of the supporters of this bill, who are apparently from all three caucuses. Tonight is the time to move on it. We want to get the bill passed; we want to get it passed tomorrow. It takes some time—my understanding is that there are quite a number of members of the disability community who want to be here, and it takes them several weeks to plan in order to arrange transportation and so on. So the time to move is now.

I am glad we had full public committee hearings, something the member for Burlington didn't provide on his bill. I am glad we had a full second reading debate, something the member for Burlington didn't provide in his bill. And I am proud to be part of a government that after so long is about to pass sweeping legislation that will make a difference in the lives not only of our disabled friends and relatives, but of all of us, because it will make all our lives better as we more fully integrate those people with disabilities into our society and treat them as equals. I am proud to support this bill and I look forward to having the chance tomorrow afternoon at approximately 3 o'clock—between 3 and 4 o'clock—to vote for the final passage of legislation that is long overdue and that for far too long has been stalled by the Conservative Party of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** I appreciate the opportunity. I am opening for the Progressive Conservative caucus this evening not just as the MPP for Leeds–Grenville, but as the House leader for the official opposition.

I certainly appreciate this opportunity, given some of the comments made by the House leader for the government, to try and put on the record some of the realities behind what has happened here and some of the misconceptions with respect to the approach of our party, which have been, I believe, fed by members of the

government and staff who work for members of the government.

It is very disturbing. We hear the House leader talk about a new approach. I believe in most ways he is sincere about that. I work with him on a fairly regular basis and I believe he does want to see this place change and become more effective and efficient in the way it does business. But I think with respect to this particular issue, the straight goods have not been delivered to the people, who very clearly care about this issue. I think most Ontarians care about this, but we know there are many in the disabled community who clearly would wish to see this legislation come to fruition and be passed. There are a number of weaknesses that we have addressed and have attempted to address as the official opposition, but at the end of the day, I think all three parties in this place want the legislation to be successful.

I will touch on a number of things the House leader raised. As an example, he talked about the disability community needing sufficient time to be present for a vote on third reading of this legislation. That was one of the reasons, one of the rationales, he put forward this evening for bringing in time allocation; in effect, closing off debate on this legislation.

The reality is that our party, the Progressive Conservative Party, for at least the last month and even before that, was raising the issue with the government, with the House leader of the government, saying, "Look, we support the legislation and we want to see it go forward, but what we are asking for is one day, and perhaps we would only put up one speaker, and that would be our critic, Mr. Jackson, and we would pass the legislation." But we felt it was critically important to have the third reading occur after the budget was tabled, because there are a significant number of implications that require funding with respect to the content of the legislation.

The legislation itself, in many respects, may not at the end of the day have the impact that we all hope it would have if the monies don't flow to complement the content of the legislation. That's the reality. That is why our party has been very adamant about saying: "Look, the budget is coming down on Wednesday. Call third reading next week, next Monday"—five days later, less than a week later—"Call the legislation then. We will support it, and we will then know whether your actions will match up to the words contained in the legislation, Bill 118." I think that was a very reasonable and responsible request, and one that I think was incumbent upon the official opposition to make, looking at our role in this place.

But what do we get from the government? We get comments like, "We're forced to do this." The reality is, they were not forced to do this. I think we can only raise questions as to why. What is the motivation? Why would they not wait five days to bring this before the House? Why would they not wait five or six short days to give the people the opportunity to fill these galleries and see all three parties in this House support this very meaningful legislation? But no, the House leader talks about playing political games.



What is happening here tonight is a political game. The government simply does not want this legislation to be dealt with after the budget is tabled. I would ask the people in the gallery this evening, why is that? Ask yourselves that question. Why do they not want to wait five days to debate and pass this legislation after the budget is tabled? I think those are serious issues to consider and contemplate, and certainly ones that concerned us as the official opposition. I think we are playing the role we were put in this place to play.

The House leader talked about our critic, Mr. Jackson, the MPP for Burlington, who is our advocate for persons with disabilities. I think there has never been a stronger advocate in the province of Ontario or in this Legislature than the MPP for Burlington. To suggest that he was filibustering in committee, again, is—I'm not going to use unparliamentary language, but it certainly is an inappropriate use of the English language.

The reality is that the MPP from Burlington, our critic with respect to this, was putting forth a significant number of amendments, talking about weaknesses in the legislation, wanting to strengthen it on behalf of the disabled in Ontario. He put forth that case in a very articulate, forceful, aggressive way, which is his wont; that's the trademark of this member when he's advocating on behalf of the disabled of Ontario.

1900

The House leader suggested we were filibustering. The reality is that at House leaders we agreed, as the official opposition, to close off clause-by-clause debate. We could have extended that. We had the opportunity to extend that ad nauseam. I will tell you, our critic had a number of other concerns which he had not had the opportunity to put on the record, but because we wanted to see this legislation move forward in a timely way, we agreed to close off debate on clause-by-clause. That's the way we have attempted to co-operate in a very helpful way with respect to the concerns of the disabled community in Ontario and in the interest of getting this legislation to the floor of the assembly and getting it passed in a timely way.

Some of the things that have happened—the executive assistant to the House leader, Maria Papadopoulos, who is a very nice lady and who, if all goes well, is going to add another person to the population of Ontario in the near future—

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth—Middlesex):** A Liberal.

**Mr. Runciman:** That's possible; I think it's a strong possibility—she's a very nice person. She sent a letter to David Lepofsky indicating that the reason for the delay on this and the fact that they had to bring in time allocation, or closure, on the debate was the resistance of Mr. Jackson, the MPP for Burlington.

That is regrettable, at the very least. I hope the good folks in the gallery will appreciate the efforts of Mr. Jackson to make sure that every avenue was explored in terms of benefiting your community and that this legislation was the best possible legislation to come before this assembly for passage. Whenever he appears and

makes a case before our caucus, that's been the case he's put forward to us. To suggest that for some political reason he doesn't want this legislation to go forward, he doesn't want the disabilities act to pass, is truly offensive, I think, to members of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, led by John Tory, who support this legislation. Beyond being offensive, I think it damages relationships in this House; it damages relationships in terms of the House leaders of the three parties. I think that most of us are committed to trying to make this place work in a more effective way. Initiatives such as this are truly unfortunate.

I'm going to give up the floor at this point, but I want to indicate that the Progressive Conservative caucus is fully supportive of Bill 118. We have not tried in any way, shape or form to hold up or delay this legislation in terms of passage. What we have tried to do, to the best of our ability as an official opposition, is protect the disabled of Ontario. We've done our best job. That's the case. Those are the true facts.

**The Acting Speaker:** Before calling for further debate, I notice in the members' gallery Mr. Gary Malkowski, who was the MPP for York East in the 35th Parliament. Welcome, Gary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** It's my pleasure to rise today on third reading debate of this bill, although technically we're debating a different motion, to say how much my caucus, and I personally, support the intent of this bill. It's about time that we started to move in this direction as a province. The community I come from has been doing many things for the past several years to try to make sure that people with disabilities of all kinds are able to more fully engage and participate in community life, whether that be employment, political, social or any kind of thing that many of us take for granted. So we certainly support the thrust of this bill.

We did have some suggestions; we thought there were things that needed to be improved. Later on you'll be hearing from my critic, Rosario Marchese, in that vein, to talk about the things he presented in second reading debate and clause-by-clause, amendments that we thought would make it better, because that is really the goal, particularly with this bill: to make it better and to make it the kind of document that we can all be proud of right here and now and not just at some time in the future.

Nonetheless, I wanted to say that we are supportive, that we do have some issues and some concerns, but overall it's definitely going in the right direction. Nobody in this day and age, or any day and age, really, can argue the very principles of access, the very tenets of equity for people with disabilities or for any people who are part of a civil society. But I have to say that there are some things that I've noticed the bill lacks. We'll go through those in greater detail.

The bill does a lot of good things, but there are some things it doesn't do. It does open up opportunities that haven't existed—which is a shame—but there are some “buts,” if I can say that, about what this bill doesn't do. It does absolutely open up access to buildings, but the

problem is the length of time it takes to get to that place when the private sector is going to be required to have accessible buildings. Mr. Speaker, look around this building. There are still very many aspects, not only of the building but of the way we do business in this place, that are not accessible on an everyday basis. We don't have someone signing every day; we don't have some basic physical requirements for accessibility in this building. It's quite amazing that that's the case. That needs to be a priority. It is a basic reality that you lead by example, and we could be doing a much better job of that, Mr. Speaker, in this very chamber.

Yes, the bill does talk about a barrier-free province, but what about children whose disability is autism? Where is the accessibility and equality for them? The current government is defying a court order to provide IBI treatment for autistic children after age six. That is a disability that the government has an obligation—in fact has been told by the courts that they need to address, and they're not doing so. So yes, the bill is better than no bill at all, but there are some real problems with what is being done on a daily basis around here. Even today in question period we were talking about parents who are required to give up their children because they can't get the treatment their children need for their severe disabilities within their existing family unit; they have to give those children up. Who would force parents to give up their children so they can get the treatment they need to live a full life? That is what's happening in this province today. So there's another place—a practical reality today—where this government needs to move on really making an impact on children and families who are living with disabilities.

Here is a plan or a bill that implies a direct and dramatic improvement for 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities, but on the other hand, the Minister of Children and Youth Services refuses to obey the law and enter into the special needs agreements that these families require under section 30 of the Child and Family Services Act. Yes, there are good intentions in the bill, and again, Mr. Marchese, my colleague from the riding of Trinity-Spadina, will go through some of the other things more specifically that he saw as amendments that were required in this bill. There are a lot of good intentions in this bill, and a lot of good work that has been done here, but we still have a system that claws back Ontario disability support payments for the poorest families in the province. It's a system that can be changed immediately by this government, and it's not. Just a couple of weeks ago, on April 25, some of the same people we see in the gallery today were here when the Minister of Education refused to continue the funding for the ASL/LSQ curriculum development program, just cut off the funding for curriculum development, in some way saying that our providers of ASL/LSQ services don't need to continue to get enriched development in their curriculum development efforts. That's simply another example of how the bill has the good talk but there are ways that we should be walking the walk, day in and day out in this province.

Opportunities are slipping through our fingers every day. Until we make a commitment to really look through that lens at every single piece of legislation, every single action or inaction that the government takes, we won't get where we want to be anytime soon, and that's for sure.

#### 1910

So I have to say congratulations to the activists who are here today from the disability community. They've been pushing and they've been pushing hard, and for good reason. Governments have been moving way too slowly. This definitely is a great victory—no ifs, ands or buts. So, congratulations on that. Without the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, we would not even be at this place right here; we wouldn't see the progress that we've seen with this bill.

Again, I support the bill, of course. Is it a panacea? Definitely not. Are there more things that need to be done, not only legislatively but day in and day out when it comes to opportunities to really make a difference? Yes; many.

I will stop my comments now because I know that our critic from Trinity-Spadina will be speaking to a greater extent to this bill.

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** This evening I'm speaking as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. The AODA falls under that ministry.

I want to begin by welcoming our guests in the galleries as well as in the other rooms in the Legislature—again, which points to the necessity of this bill. There is not an easy way to do ASL here, so we have members of the deaf community and the hard-of-hearing community in other parts of the building, as well as people in wheelchairs, visiting today and listening and watching on TV. I want to welcome all of you and I want to thank you.

I want to begin by acknowledging how significant this moment is and recognizing those who contributed in getting us to this point. First, thank you to all the members of the Legislature for supporting this bill at second reading. I would like to especially thank the members of the Legislature's standing committee on social policy for their hard work. Those members sat through six extensive days of public hearings and an additional five days of clause-by-clause debate—hearings in which they listened to Ontarians because they wanted to know their opinions on how to strengthen this bill. That is an achievement that should not go unrecognized.

I remember the days when I used to sit on committees as an opposition member, and I recall that we never had five days of clause-by-clause debate on any bill. In fact, when Bill 125, the ODA, went to clause-by-clause debate, only one day was set aside.

This time around, we wanted to do things differently. We wanted to ensure that Ontarians were heard. We wanted to ensure that we crafted a strong bill which allows persons with disabilities to live, work and play without facing barriers. The opinions that came out of the



public hearings shaped the amendments that were brought forward. The members on the committee put forward their views during the amendment process and worked collaboratively to make a significant piece of legislation even better.

Ten years ago, a group of 20 Ontarians with disabilities set out to make Ontario barrier-free. This bill is their bill, and passage of this bill will be their success. The Premier promised this legislation during the election. Empowerment for the disabled is his priority, as it was for his father, who was one of the first champions in this Legislature for those with disabilities.

When putting the original version of the bill together, I heard the views of more than 1,000 people who took part in seven regional meetings across the province. I heard the views of 246 stakeholder representatives, who gave lively insights at 14 round tables. I was gratified that our live Webcast for students with disabilities registered 2,000 hits.

This legislation is about empowerment and inclusion. It is about allowing all Ontarians to reach for their dreams. What made eminent sense during the crafting of the bill was to give Ontarians with disabilities access to the levers of power; give them the opportunity to shape the legislation affecting their own future.

I was delighted when we met with Ontarians with disabilities. Despite years of barriers, years of discrimination, they had a gung-ho, pragmatic, positive approach. They didn't ask for the sun and the moon; they asked for fairness; they asked for equality; they asked for the opportunity to contribute more fully to the building of Ontario. They asked to be partners in every aspect of life in Ontario, and they asked to be partners in making this legislation work.

I was very pleased with the approach and attitude of business leaders across Ontario. They didn't shout and protest about the bill. Time and again, when I sat down at the table with business people and Ontarians with disabilities, they just wanted to figure out the best ways to build a more inclusive society. Business people in Ontario understand that by building a province of diversity, inclusion and fairness, we are building a province where people want to live, a province where people want to invest, a province held in high esteem around the globe.

As the Premier said when we introduced the bill, "This is landmark legislation. It will improve access to workplaces and public spaces, employment, customer service, communication and transportation. This bill should make Ontario proud.... Every Ontarian benefits when we tap into the potential of each Ontarian."

When I brought forward this bill in October, I made it clear that I was open to suggestions for improvement and the Premier was open to suggestions for improvement. Building a dynamic and inclusive Ontario meant ensuring a dynamic and inclusive process for crafting this legislation. If we were to help ensure the independence, participation and integration of Ontarians with disabilities, we needed to listen to their independent views on the legislation. We needed to ensure their ongoing par-

ticipation in strengthening the bill. We needed to integrate their practical ideas into the final version of the legislation.

The standing committee received a wide range of constructive ideas. There were presentations across the province that were both deeply moving and extremely helpful, messages of hope, stories of resilience, truly inspiring calls for action, presentations from the March of Dimes, the Schizophrenia Society, the Arthritis Society, independent living centres, the Retail Council of Canada, teachers, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, municipalities, the CNIB, the Paraplegic Association, and a host of other associations, individuals and persons with disabilities. Thank you for your dedication, your determination and your thoughtful advice.

There are 41 amendments to this bill. They flow from the real-life experiences and recommendations made during the committee hearings.

There was near unanimity that the government needed to be made more accountable for the results achieved under the legislation. To that end, the amended bill requires me and my successors to prepare and make public an annual report on the effectiveness of the legislation. There will also be a comprehensive review of the act and regulations after four years, with further reviews every three years after that.

After hearing from Ontarians, the committee recommended that all regulations under the act be published in draft form first. That way, citizens, especially those with disabilities, can have a say in the final wording of the regulations. I think that is an excellent amendment. It builds on the spirit of partnership and inclusion we are all striving to achieve.

While others will comment on a number of the other amendments, there are two in particular that I would like to underscore.

First, the bill now recognizes the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities. That is very important for Ontarians with disabilities. It's very important for all of us. It is the compelling reminder of why we have to keep moving forward. It is the compelling reminder that we must strive daily to build an ever better world.

Secondly, the bill is amended so that it applies to this Legislative Assembly. It is up to this House, it is up to us, as legislators, to lead, and I know that everyone in this chamber wants to do that.

This comprehensive legislation will make Ontario a leader in accessibility for those with disabilities. This bill has a long-term vision. It has an action plan. It has clear rules. It has a precise process for developing standards that are both mandatory and fair. This bill has strong measures for enforcement.

The legislation broadens the definition of "disability" to include invisible as well as visible disabilities, the physical and the non-physical. The legislation recognizes the reality that in the real world, disabilities include learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, depression, and sensory and perceptual disabilities.

**1920**

The bill has a broad approach to the barriers faced by Ontarians with disabilities: visible and invisible barriers, physical and non-physical barriers. This bill will help us knock down those barriers—barriers like requiring someone with dyslexia to fill out a written job application on the spot, barriers like those faced by people with mental health issues, technological barriers, and that biggest barrier of all, the barrier of attitude—by recognizing that public education is key to the success of this legislation and key to the success of an inclusive Ontario.

We are continuing to knock down barriers for women, immigrants, visible minorities, gays and lesbians and aboriginal peoples. With the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, we will make a tremendous move forward in knocking down barriers for the 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities, and we will continue to do so.

This bill is vital because it covers both the public and, for the first time, the private sectors, more than 300,000 organizations in all. It is vital because it covers all persons and organizations that provide goods, services, facilities, accommodation or employment. The bill calls for standards and timelines for action in areas that affect people's everyday lives: transit, restaurants, hospitals, schools and retail stores. In the spirit which is giving birth to this legislation, standards will be developed sector by sector, with Ontarians with disabilities as full partners at the table.

This bill will benefit our province enormously: more participation in the workforce by people with disabilities; improved educational opportunities for thousands upon thousands of our children; a higher quality of life for more than a million citizens; and tapping the full potential of every Ontarian.

This bill is fundamental to reaching the full economic, social, cultural and human potential of our province. It is fundamental to embracing and celebrating our common humanity. When we talk about building the future of Ontario, it's not just bricks and mortar. It's the values we share together. It's the principles upon which we choose to act. It's the legacy of decency and generosity and respect for individual dignity that we want to pass on to our children. When this bill passes, Ontario will become the first Canadian jurisdiction to adopt a comprehensive approach to accessibility, covering all spheres of government and business, covering all disabilities and all major aspects of daily life.

As Lillian Morgenthau of Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus said, "Accessibility for the disabled means independence. It opens up the doors of isolation."

As Sandra Johnston of the county of Simcoe accessibility advisory committee put it, "The proposed Bill 118 ... gives me enormous hope for the future of people with disabilities. If this new bill is passed, independence and freedom will not just be on the minds of those people with disabilities; it will be their reality."

As Dr. Doreen Winkler from the Institute of Doctors in Social Work said: "We commend all three political

parties for their unanimous vote in favour of the bill on second reading. We would encourage all parties to vote similarly at third reading so that the possibility exists this law could be passed unanimously."

What has come through to me most clearly during the past year and a half of consultation and debate on this legislation is the need to change our society's mindset about disabilities. That is certainly the message delivered over and over again to me by young Ontarians, by students with disabilities.

A few days ago, I attended a conference put on by the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp. about acquired brain injuries. It was a symposium on an issue that was extremely important to me long before I entered politics. I met with dedicated health care professionals, family members and people with acquired brain injuries. With all of the highly skilled neurologists, neurosurgeons, occupational therapists, researchers, teachers, nurses, behavioural scientists and school psychologists present, their message to me was the simple but profound message of the conference: inclusion.

Over and over, they made the point that beyond any medical care, the most significant factor for the successful recovery of someone with a brain injury is the need to feel included, the need to feel empowered, the need to exercise the maximum amount of independence. We need to instill in our children an acute awareness of disability issues. We need to make them champions of a truly barrier-free society.

I know that when this Legislative Assembly speaks with one voice on major issues, it sends a message. It sends a message that in Ontario, we are united in wanting to foster the most open, caring and forward-thinking place in the world.

I hope that all members of this House will vote in unison to make Bill 118 into the law of our province.

In saying that, I wish to acknowledge that the members for Burlington and Trinity-Spadina, despite their usual feisty attacks on me and the government, have helped tremendously to move this legislation forward. I'm grateful to them, as I am to the two parliamentary assistants who have worked intensely and intensively with me for the past 18 months on this bill, as I am to the members of my own caucus who have really pushed for this legislation for many years.

I come back, in this final debate, to remarks made by the Premier when we introduced this bill on October 12 of last year:

"I especially want to acknowledge the efforts of the many advocates for people with disabilities.

"Their passion and determination are a testament, I believe, to the desire of Ontarians with disabilities to have the opportunity to fully contribute to life in our province."

Let us move forward together. Let us, with help, give all Ontarians the opportunities to make the most of their lives.

I will now attempt to finish in American sign language.



Full accessibility benefits us all. It is the cornerstone of strong communities and a strong economy. This is a new era for accessibility.

It's harder than it seems.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm only going to speak for a short period of time. I just want to support what our House leader had said earlier, and that is that although the government House leader, in his comments earlier, mentioned quite openly that he felt that our caucus was trying to delay this legislation, nothing could be further from the truth. What we are really trying to say to the people here and to the people at home is that we believe this final vote should have actually occurred after the budget is delivered on Wednesday of this week. We feel very strongly, as a caucus, that that's a concern. We would hate to think that we would stand here as three caucuses united in supporting this piece of legislation, only to come back here on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday and next week find out that there's no funding available in the 2005-06 provincial budget to actually implement what these folks here are looking for.

So I wanted to assure the folks at home and assure the folks who are in attendance here in the gallery this evening that we, as a caucus, fully support this piece of legislation, but we do want to make sure that there is funding available to start to implement the requirements of this legislation. We think that's very important. That's why we would like to have seen maybe five or six more days before this bill actually had a third reading vote. We didn't think that was too much to ask of the House leader.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few comments tonight.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** It's a pleasure to speak to this bill. I was in hearings for literally all of the time that we toured around the province with the bill.

I welcome those who are watching this parliamentary channel. It's 7:30, and we're on live, as usual. It's May 9. I know, because tomorrow is May 10.

New Democrats want to say that we have no problem supporting the bill, in spite of the fact that this government has rejected many of the amendments we made. We didn't, in our view, have to have a time allocation motion. We were quite prepared to support the bill without such a motion. One day of debate would do it for us, and we put that on the record. I am not sure that we would have accomplished any more than what we are about to say on this bill.

1930

For the record, I do want to talk about some of the suggestions and amendments we made as New Democrats that were, by and large, rejected in spite of the new democracy that reigns here in this assembly. I do say that the bill—and some people spoke to it, but just to give the context—“provides for the establishment of accessibility standards by regulation.” The accessibility standards will be mandatory and will apply to any “persons and organizations in both the public and private sectors”—some-

thing the previous bill by the Conservative government did not do. Employers who deal with the public will be required to meet these standards within a set timeline of 20 years, and I'll briefly speak to that shortly. “The bill requires the minister to establish a process for the development of accessibility standards” and to establish several standards development committees. So that's basically the framework. Others mentioned it, but I thought I would do the same before I speak to some of the issues.

First, I want to say that for a long time we've had a Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code in this province, and both ban discrimination because of physical or mental disability in many aspects of life, yet in my opinion and in the opinion of many people with disabilities, they have not been able to successfully and effectively root out the old barriers that impede persons with disabilities and prevent the erection of new barriers. They have not been successful in spite of the laws contained in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

While this bill is an attempt to remove the barriers, I fear that some of these barriers will continue down the line. Given past experience with the charter and the Ontario Human Rights Code, I am fearful that even with this bill there will be many in society who will continue to discriminate.

Discrimination has been the norm in this province, in this country and in the world when it comes to people with disabilities. We know that approximately 15% of people in this country have a disability of one form or another. That's why we wanted the purpose clause of this act to say that it should “achieve a barrier-free Ontario for persons with disabilities through the identification or removal of existing barriers and the prevention of new barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in all aspects of life in Ontario.” That is the amendment we moved in the purpose clause, because the purpose clause originally contained in this bill said, “The purpose of this act is to benefit all Ontarians by,” and then it lists all the ways in which it would benefit all Ontarians. People with disabilities and New Democrats argued that this is not to benefit all Ontarians; this is to benefit people with disabilities who have been discriminated against for years and years, and we want to achieve a barrier-free society as it relates to the discrimination against people with disabilities. That's what the bill is all about.

To pretend that it was a bill to benefit all Ontarians was a sham. People with disabilities pointed that out in the hearings, and we pointed it out on a regular basis. In the end the government, in spite of the amendment we moved, moved its own little amendment to try to make it better, and they said, “Recognizing the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario, the purpose of this act is to benefit all Ontarians.” They kept the same clause, the same language, except they wanted to add a little line that recognizes, at least, that

there has been a history of discrimination against people with disabilities.

I said in committee that it appears as if they're pasting two thoughts together, keeping the old language and incorporating something new to try to incorporate a New Democratic amendment that reflected many of the points of view presented in the committee. It just didn't seem to sit well together, as if, I argued, they were pasted together. That's what they did. It doesn't say, like most Liberals said when they were in opposition and speaking to Bill 125 introduced by then-Minister Jackson, arguing against the Conservative bill—which was, I must admit, very weak, and we said that—“There is discrimination against people with disabilities. It should remove barriers, and the purpose clause should say that.”

They got into government and they couldn't find the strength to just utter those words like “achieving a barrier-free society.” They just couldn't do it. But at least they found the strength through, I imagine, a great deal of consultation among themselves and presumably consultation with the minister that maybe they should include a line, “We recognize there is a history of discrimination against people with disabilities.” God bless. We accomplished a little bit; not bad. In a Liberal context, it's all you can hope for, really. But it wasn't bad. They recognize that there is a history of discrimination. OK. Dr. Bountrogianni and members of the committee listened, in part. OK. Not bad.

Moving on, the time frame is 20 years. Most of the deputations and delegations that came—I didn't count them, but more or less, give or take, 90% of the deputants—said 20 years is too long. Did the government members listen to that? No. In fact, they argued, “Please, this is a time frame, really. It's nothing more than that. We will accomplish what we will accomplish”—and maybe they will speak to that as well; who knows?—“so don't get caught up in the time frame. It's not a big deal.” Marchese said it was a big deal; 90% of the deputants said it was a big deal. But the Liberal caucus members in that committee said, “No, it's not a big deal.”

If it's about listening to what people are telling you, they didn't listen. They said that 20 years is too long. So Marchese moves a modest amendment: “Let's bring the time frame down to 15 years.” Hardly revolutionary, I would say—five years. The government members, obviously under the direction and possibly duress of who knows whom in the Premier's office, just couldn't agree to that. Five years. We've talking 15 long years to be able to deal with the components of this bill. But don't you fret, because the government says, “You don't gotta worry, because we'll pass it in due course and everybody will be happy.” I argued that 20 years was too long, that surely you can accomplish whatever it is you want to within 15 years—a whole long time. If in 15 years we can't get the business sector to buy into this, we've got a problem on our hands. The 20-year time frame is about saying to business, “Please don't fight us. We're working together on this. Get your act together. You've got a whole heap of time, 20 years, to be able to raise a couple

of dollars that it might take to make buildings accessible,” and so on and so forth.

The 20-year time frame is about making sure that business didn't come out swinging against this government, because that's what that's about. And it's about not doing anything for a whole long time. I argued that we—mostly men; I suspect that women are different than we are. If you give men a time frame of 15 years, they will take 15 years. If you give them a time frame of 20 years, they will take 20. That's the way men are. If the administration was run by women, they might do it earlier; it's possible. I don't know. I'm guessing, based on gender differences. I could be wrong. Men should speak to this—I don't know—and women should speak to this; I don't know. But if you give 20 years—I wager a whole lot on this—the bureaucracy will take 20 years. Governed by men or women, I wager it will take 20 years. It'll be dragged out. Nobody has to worry about the timeline, because nothing will happen.

1940

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** Oh, come on.

**Mr. Marchese:** The minister says “Oh, come on.” She's saying, “Look, I'm going to be here for the next 20 years, and as long as I'm in government, I'm going to make sure it happens.” Well, Dr. Bountrogianni, the minister, may not be here for 20 years. We may have a different government. The bill will be here, but, Minister—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Marchese:** I might. Remember, Doctor, we introduced employment equity legislation that would benefit people who had traditionally been discriminated against, including women—you're included—people with disabilities, people of colour and aboriginal people. It took the Tories no time to—

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** They're not going to get back in.

**Mr. Marchese:** But you don't know that. You do not know this. The Tories could get back into power; you don't know. If God exists, it might not happen; you're right. But we don't know.

So we say, if you've got 20 years, not too much is going to happen. If Dr. Bountrogianni, the minister, is not here, who knows who's going to be in that ministry? The bill might be there, but it may be in this form or some other form, or it may be gone. You don't know. So I said, “Let's shrink this time frame by a measly five years.” If you can't accomplish what you want in 15, we have a big problem. If the minister thinks she's going to accomplish a lot, why couldn't we do it in 15? Why 20?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** We'll accomplish a lot in 15.

**Mr. Marchese:** Ay yi yi. You see the new democracy? The new democracy, the Liberal kind of democracy, says, “We're going to work together; we're going to work differently.” Then you propose something and they say, “No, no, no.” So what does this new democracy mean? If you suggest and argue and make your points and the Liberal caucus says, “No, no, no,” what kind of new democracy do we have here?



They defeated that as well. We're just putting this on the record so that those who watch the parliamentary channel will know.

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** Who watches the parliamentary channel?

**Mr. Marchese:** Who? Your buddies, I'm sure.

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** And my mother.

**Mr. Marchese:** Your mother probably watches you too, for sure. A whole lot of people watch this parliamentary channel. I know, because when I travel they seem to recognize me here and there from time to time. That's why we need this channel. Otherwise, how would people know who we are and what we say in this place?

The third point: consultations. "At the direction of the minister, the council shall hold public consultations." Marchese argued in committee that the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council should be able to hold hearings on whatever issue they deem to be important. The Liberal members of that committee said, "No, we can't do that. We've wasted so much time and people have been so discriminated against for so long, we can't have more hearings and more consultations." "Oh?" I said. "Well, how's that?" If you've got a 20-year time frame, how could one consultation, two consultations, or three, four or five, slow down this bill?

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** It could hold it up.

**Mr. Marchese:** Huh? How could it hold it up? We've got 20 years. If the accessibility standards committee decided to hold maybe one meeting, maybe two, maybe three, surely it wouldn't hold up this bill much, would it, Minister? I could be wrong. I'm just putting out the argument.

I was puzzled, in consternation, from time to time, listening to the arguments of the Liberal committee members, of course under the direction of someone—I can't say the minister. But you see how that works: "At the direction of." Committee members do whatever "at the direction of."

My worry was that if the accessibility standards council wants to meet, they should be able to do so and have to not wait for the minister to say, "OK, you can hold a meeting. Maybe next year you can hold a meeting on this issue or that issue." You understand. You've got to wait for the minister to tell you whether you can do something: whether you can meet, whether you can discuss this or that. Does that sound like the new Liberal democracy that you like, that you support? I don't know. I was puzzled by this new democracy in Ontario, because it seems odd that you've got to wait for the minister to then do something.

There is still time for the Liberals to stand up and defend that argument to the citizens watching, to the people with disabilities. Mind you, people with disabilities have heard it already, because they follow this very carefully, so they know. But for the public watching, I want the Liberal members who were in that committee to make the arguments refuting what I'm saying or just to explain why some of these amendments didn't get passed.

"At the direction of the minister, the council"—the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council—"shall advise the minister on," and then there's a whole heap of things they can advise on. But it's at her direction. Now, she's a good person; that's not the problem here. She's right: I'm tough, from time to time, on some people here in this place. She's not the problem; I have no problems with this minister. But she may not be in that ministry. You might have another minister and you might have another government.

But that's not the point. In the new democracy in this place, the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council shall advise the minister on matters that the minister directs them to advise her on. That's not the way it should work. It sounds like dumb politics to me. I could be mistaken, but I raise it just so people understand. The standards advisory council should be able to be somewhat independent, a little independent, not have to run to the minister and ask for permission to do such and such. I think they should be given some independence. Correct me at some point, Minister, if I'm wrong, or maybe your parliamentary assistant or others. If they have no independence and they are purely at the mercy of the minister and his or her direction, it is a problemo, as I see it.

We talked as well about appointing inspectors, because we believe this bill is weak on enforcement. In the old bill, before the amendments, there was language that spoke to the idea that inspectors "may" be appointed. Deputants, Marchese and the Tories as well said that you've got to appoint inspectors; you have to say in the language, "They shall be appointed." If you don't say that and leave it to the direction of the minister, where the minister "may" appoint or hire an inspector, it may or may not happen. You understand the language. That's the way it works. If it's not "shall" but "may," it probably won't happen. Given the fiscal situation the government is faced with, they might say, "My goodness, we've got so many inspectors from the city and other provincial areas, we'll just use them, whether or not they have the expertise. There are so many inspectors. Don't you worry." That is what they tried to say earlier on in committee: "There are other inspectors, and we can just ship them off from other responsibilities to do this as well." This takes some expertise. This is a big job.

So in committee, the government members, I'm assuming at the direction of the minister or someone else, introduced language that said they shall hire "one or more inspectors." Listen to this, because you'll grasp the substance: one or more. If you hire one, you are within the spirit of the amendment. Correct? Yes. Cam Jackson and I argued that if they hire just one inspector, that will do to satisfy the amendment that the Liberals introduced.

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** You and Cam agreed?

**Mr. Marchese:** Cam and I agreed on this. It's a beautiful thing. I tell you, having the Conservatives in opposition is beautiful, because we agree with each other so often in so many areas, it feels like we've got a brotherhood from time to time. It's really neat. We had

the same experience with the Liberals when they were in opposition.

**Mrs. Mitchell:** Well, that's good. You had something good.

**Mr. Marchese:** It's true. In opposition, so many beautiful things happen. Cam was even more radical on some issues than I was. It flabbergasted me. I was happy, of course. I thought, "I wonder whether Cam got any agreement from his caucus to speak on their behalf." At least he did, and you presume that the caucus was on board. We had a great team, and we beat up the Liberals on a regular basis—for good reasons, obviously, as I am outlining.

**1950**

On the issue of inspectors, the point is that you can't have enforcement if you don't have inspectors, and you can't have enforcement if you only have one inspector. Through you, Speaker, one inspector won't do. But that's language they passed. That's the Liberal way, you see. When you can't get what you want, not to do anything, then you do something to appear to be doing something. That's just the way they are. God bless them. People like them. When they tell you they're going to do something and then they don't, people still love that. People love to hear balderdash, to hear—what's the word? Clerk, help me with words I can use that are not inappropriate. Throw me a word or two.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Liars.

**Mr. Marchese:** You see, you can't say that. Clerk, you know what I mean. The Liberals made so many promises before the election, and people loved to hear the manipulation of things, the dissembling of things—don't get up, Clerk—the manufacturing of things. People loved to hear that you can increase services and not increase taxes and still balance the budget. People want to believe that, and many people did. That's why they vote for Liberals. Then they get into power, and when we ask questions about the promises, they say, "Well, let me tell you what we did." They always say, "Let me tell you what we did." Then they say, "We've done more than any other government before in the history of this assembly." The Tories used to say that too. Every Tory who used to be there—and Dr. Bountrogianni, the minister, knows this, because she was over here. They used to say, "We've done more than any other government in the history of this place." Now Liberals get there and they say the same thing: "We're doing so much more." We say, "But what about your promises?" and they don't speak about that because it's embarrassing.

But people want to hear promises, even though they know they can't be kept. Before the election, I used to say to people, "Look, the Liberals are"—I can't say it, right? It's almost coming out; it starts with an "I." People love to hear it, and they want to believe it. People are always hopeful, thinking, "Maybe they can do it." But how can they do it? I usually say, "It's 17th-century alchemy," when you turn a metal into gold. It didn't exist then and it doesn't exist now. It can't be done. But people

are so gullible. God bless them. If the Lord is there, God bless them.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Oh, he's there. You can count on that.

**Mr. Marchese:** I don't know. There's so much discrimination in the world; I don't know.

We got to the appointment of inspectors. They'll hire one and the job is done and that's it. That's the way it's going to be. Then I said, "OK. Why not appoint an accessibility commissioner to monitor?"—

**Ms. Horwath:** That's a good idea.

**Mr. Marchese:** Well, they did it with some other bill that we debated the other day. There's a registrar on the reefer madness, the marijuana madness, bill that we debated about two weeks ago. They're going to hire a registrar to monitor what's going on in that field of the reefer madness problem. I said, "If you can do that"—I know. You're wincing in terms of, "What is he talking about?" It's a bill that Monte Kwinter moved the other day. I said, "Look, if you can hire a registrar to deal with issues around grow-ops, grow houses, the marijuana houses, why couldn't you have hired an accessibility commissioner for this bill?" We have an Environmental Commissioner. Why couldn't we have an accessibility commissioner to monitor what the government is doing vis-à-vis Bill 118? With the capable, discerning, intelligent members that we have on the committee, we just didn't get far, with all due respect. But I thought it was a good motion. That was one of the few amendments that, yes, involved some money, but it didn't have to involve a whole lot of money. We were contemplating that it would be one person with some staff, minimal, because you don't have to have a whole bureaucracy. You don't.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** Who blocked it, Rosie?

**Mr. Marchese:** The Liberals.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** The Liberals?

**Mr. Marchese:** Yes. Cam Jackson and I were on the same team. All the Liberal members said, "No, we can't do that."

**Ms. Horwath:** You're kind of demanding.

**Mr. Marchese:** I don't know. I thought it would be good to monitor a field where people with disabilities have been traditionally discriminated against. Wouldn't you want someone to keep an eye on it to make sure of what this bill is doing and what people are doing with respect to it, to make sure that they are abiding by the spirit of the law, that you would hire someone to monitor this bill, and that that would be a good thing? All the Liberals on that committee said no, at the direction, I'm assuming, of someone, and it doesn't have to be the minister in this case. I generally say that it's in the Premier's office. Whenever there is a blockage, it's in the Premier's office. It's not the poor ministers who have to usher in the bill and keep an eye on it; it's the Premier's office. They generally say, "No, we can't afford that. Just go to committee and defend why we can't do it. We can't afford it, but don't say that. Don't go to committee saying that we can't afford it, don't you do that, because



if you do that, then people would say, 'Come on, it's not an issue of money here.'

**Ms. Horwath:** If you tell the truth, then they wouldn't recognize—

**Mr. Marchese:** If you tell the truth, then it would be a problemo, and Liberals are very careful in that regard.

On the issue of accessibility and someone monitoring what we're doing with this bill, all the government members said no to it. I put this for the record, because, in my view, all of the things that I'm talking about would make the bill a little better—maybe not much, but a little.

We talked about education. We moved an amendment that speaks to issues of education, because the minister is big on this, with all due respect, Doctor. I don't mean to put you on the spot, but the minister said that at one of the debates in this place: "The next principle: public education"—

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** That's it? You just kind of gloss over that one.

**Mr. Marchese:** Well, no; it's important: "This area is my passion"—and I believe that—"I will use every tool available to help shape a change in attitude, a change in values. Over and over again, people with disabilities have told me that the biggest barrier of all is one of attitude"—I agree—"On this score, I look forward to working closely with every MPP to help foster a true culture of inclusion for people with disabilities."

I agree with that. It was in that spirit that I moved an amendment that basically said, "conducting educational programs and promoting public awareness on the accessibility standards and on the work and progress of the standards development committees." That was my amendment, including another clause, which was, "establishing and overseeing a process to develop and implement all accessibility standards necessary to achieving the purposes of this act."

It was in the spirit of the quote that I read from the minister that I moved an amendment. Why? Because most of the people that came to that committee spoke about the need for public education, the need to educate in order to change the culture of discrimination. If we cannot educate properly and do it in the scheme of an educational system, and do it in a way that was contained in the bill so that it wouldn't be left at the discretion and/or at the direction of the minister and/or the government, if it were so contained, there would be a duty on government to in fact educate. They didn't do it.

We all recognize that education is key to maintaining the spirit of the bill and defending the spirit of what's contained in the bill, that if you want to break down barriers, if you do not educate, it will not happen, and the progress will be slow. I took it on the basis of what the minister said about education being important to her, and I have no doubt that it's important to her. If it was important to the Liberal members on that committee, you would never know it from their attitude, because it was rejected out of hand. There was no discussion about the merits of the amendment, no discussion about, "Oh, yes, how good it would be, but"—for who knows what—"we

can't do it." I was left there wondering, "If the government has an interest in educating, I just don't see it." You translate the spirit of what you want by putting the language into the bill to make it happen. If it's not there, it doesn't happen. I have been here for 15 years, and I know that if it is not contained in the bill, it doesn't happen, because governments move on to do what they've got to do. Ministers move from bill to bill. They don't necessarily have the time to dwell on the same bill over and over again. They move on. Governments move on and they forget about that particular bill.

It doesn't mean some civil servants forget. It doesn't mean some members of provincial Parliament forget. It doesn't even mean the minister forgets. It doesn't mean that at all. It means that we get busy in this place, and we forget education as part of what is vital about any bill if we want people to understand what we are doing, to understand what is contained in the bill, to understand their responsibilities and obligations. If you don't do that, it will take more than 20 years for people to catch on to what we're talking about—more than that. It won't take any less than 20, I can guarantee that, but it will take at least 20 and then some, and beyond and beyond.

That was defeated.

## 2000

We talked about unions. We talked about the need to have unions as part of this bill. We said that unions represent about 30% to 35% of the population. They have an important role to play. They came in front of the committee and said, and I quote someone from the Ontario Federation of Labour who said:

"We are urging the government to compel us and employers to begin this process immediately by implementing a parallel process to the Pay Equity Act, 1987, passed by the David Peterson government. This is one key to the success of the legislation. Our amendments would require every union and employer to bargain accessibility plans. These plans would identify barriers in the workplace that deny access to persons with disabilities. The plans would set out measures to remove these barriers on a timely basis. In workplaces where there is no union, the employer would do, and post, the plan."

He goes on to say more things about this particular issue. I supported this. This is one of the areas where Cam Jackson and I disagreed. That's OK, because we agreed on 90% to 95% of all the amendments we made.

This is one area that the Liberals had no interest in supporting either; nary a comment on this particular issue. We thought, given that unions play an important role, that 35% are unionized, that's a place to look to in terms of making this bill happen in the workplace. There was no support from the government. It was rejected out of hand. These were the amendments we moved. We feel the amendments would have made this bill much better. We feel it reflected the changes and amendments, by and large, moved by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee and others who are here, ARCH and others. It was in keeping with the spirit of what they would have liked to have seen in this bill. Most of these were rejected. Yes,

Liberals introduced a few amendments that made it a little better, but we wanted to put them on the record so that the public watching this and people with disabilities watching this know that we did try to make this a stronger bill.

In spite of the fact that the government rejected most of these amendments, we stand here tonight to say we will support this bill. We have no desire to delay, to impede or to block it in any way. As far as we concerned, we have had our say for the evening and we want this bill to go through in a way that meets the wishes of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee and others.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe):** It's an honour to speak on Bill 118, the proposed Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. It's also an honour to serve as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I share Dr. Bountrogianni's passion and determination to build an accessible Ontario, an inclusive society where everyone contributes and everyone benefits.

As the honourable members will recall, Dr. Bountrogianni introduced this proposed legislation on October 12. The bill she tabled was the product of extensive, province-wide, fully accessible consultation over three months in early 2004. The House approved Bill 118 in principle with a vote of 72-0 on second reading on December 2.

In considering Bill 118, the standing committee on social policy held six days of accessible public hearings in five cities around Ontario from January 31 to February 8 of this year. At the outset, Dr. Bountrogianni said she was open to workable suggestions for improving the bill to reach the goal we all share: the best possible legislation to achieve accessibility for people with disabilities in Ontario. In all, the committee heard more than 160 presentations and received about 500 written submissions.

After concluding the hearings, the committee moved on to clause-by-clause examination of the bill. I have the privilege of serving as Vice-Chair of the committee. I can tell you that during this debate, the three parties were all working to make a good bill even better. The government listened to input provided during the public hearings. In response, we brought forward 39 amendments. The opposition parties also proposed numerous amendments. All parties were basically in agreement with constructive suggestions from stakeholders to strengthen the bill in several key areas. Many of the amendments brought forward by the opposition parties were similar to ones tabled by the government. We accepted three opposition amendments in full. The result of the committee's work is that the amended bill now before the House is a better bill because of the public hearings and the clause-by-clause process. It's a bill every member of this House can be proud to support.

Les intervenants nous ont expliqué clairement que le gouvernement devrait être tenu responsable des résultats aux termes de cette loi. Two amendments deal with this issue. The first would require the minister to prepare an annual report on the implementation and effectiveness of

the act. The second would require a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the act and regulations after four years, with further reviews every three years. These reviews would involve public consultations. The annual reports and the comprehensive reviews would provide timely public reporting on the measurable result achieved under the legislation.

Another key amendment, again in response to stakeholder input, would see the act apply to the Legislative Assembly.

Yet another amendment provides that the entire act, if passed, would come into effect immediately upon royal assent instead of on proclamation, which would leave it to the government's discretion.

D'autres changements ont été conçus pour mieux expliquer les clauses du projet de loi. For example, an amendment would clarify that the minister may invite persons, other than people with disabilities, representative of sectors and ministries to serve on standards development committees. Likewise, an amendment would allow the minister to pay an allowance and reimbursement to standards development committee members as set out in the committee's terms of reference.

A series of changes would make it more certain that the implementation step would in fact be taken. For example, within a reasonable time after the first accessibility standard is established, an amendment would make it mandatory to appoint one or more inspectors and to designate one or more tribunals to hear appeals.

This proposed legislation has teeth, with strong compliance and enforcement provisions. Amendments would fine-tune some of the enforcement provisions. For example, mediation of disputes would be allowed only where the parties consent and the tribunal considers mediation in the public interest. Adding the phrase "in the public interest" is designed to make sure that mediation in fact furthers the long-term goal of accessibility.

## 2010

While we as legislators have been debating this proposed legislation, it certainly belongs to the people of Ontario. The persistence of the disability community over more than a decade has brought accessibility to the top of the public agenda, and the determination of disability stakeholders to get the best legislation possible has very much shaped the bill now before us. As well, many in the business community and the broader public sector have had the foresight to support this proposed legislation. They recognize the economic and social contributions, both actual and potential, of people with disabilities.

Tous les Ontariens croient que chaque Ontarien doit avoir l'opportunité de travailler, apprendre, avoir plaisir et ainsi participer à la société au maximum de sa capacité. Cette loi proposée, que nous avons développée ensemble, va nous mettre fermement sur la route vers une société accessible.

This bill passed second reading unanimously. It was reported back from committee unanimously. It's my hope that it will receive third reading unanimously and send



people with disabilities the message that this province is truly their own.

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I'm very pleased to be able to stand in the House this evening and comment on Bill 118. It has been my privilege to participate in numerous debates on this subject, and tonight is no exception.

I appreciate the comments of my colleague the member from Leeds—Grenville, who put on the record the circumstances that we find ourselves in this evening: that we are calling a time allocation motion on a bill that we've not had any debate on, let alone closure of the debate on it.

I'm at a loss to understand why the Liberal House leader, the member from Windsor, takes such great delight in attacking me personally and, on occasion, members of my family. However, I wish to set that aside.

My support personally and that of my caucus are all a matter of public record. That began very clearly on the day the minister tabled this legislation, at which point I indicated that we would be supporting any legislation and any efforts that moved the yardsticks forward on behalf of the agenda for persons with disability in our province. I have been true to that word. During second reading debate in this Legislature I reiterated that same fact, and also reinforced it as one of the few people who participated for every single day and every single hour of not only the public hearings across the province but also the clause-by-clause debate and the presentations from all three caucuses to make this a better bill.

However, I stand by the concerns being expressed. It was abundantly clear to the House leader for the Liberal Party that we were going to support this bill. We indicated that very clearly. That was one of the conditions in the negotiations between the House leaders. This is all a matter of record. We had indicated that we were hopeful that the final debate and vote would occur after the budget so we could measure the degree to which there's going to be a financial commitment to move those yardsticks forward for persons with disability in our province.

The concerns being expressed about this point are well founded, and they're well founded on the first and most important principle: that this government has increasingly been tabling legislation without any costing whatsoever, without any public declaration about the costing. Yet we know it was a standard—I know personally that when I tabled Bill 125, the original ODA, it had to be costed or it could not appear before cabinet. It could not appear before cabinet until it had gone to Management Board for approval, because it involved money.

The only reason that a bill can go forward without a costing is because there are no real apparent costs on the face of it. If that is the case, we have a serious problem. We have a serious problem because we are jettisoning elements of the old bill. ODAC, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, and its head, David Lepofsky, have indicated that they want to ensure that elements of the old bill remain in this bill in order that the combination of the two strengthen the overall objectives for

disabled persons and that they get all the benefits of both pieces of legislation. That's a reasonable request and shouldn't put a challenge before this government.

But in the time I have this evening, I want to put on the record the issues about what is being removed by this government: concessions that the disability community have earned and have won that are now entrenched in legislation and that they're about to lose.

Before I go into a lot of detail, I first want to, as I have on three or four occasions, commend the minister for her undertaking in this regard; for the consultation process, for the thorough debate, for public hearings, and the time allocated for clause-by-clause. I believe the minister to be sincere, but I also believe the minister is in a government right now that is having a considerable amount of difficulty freeing up the resources that are the essential measurement—to put it in the common vernacular, it's putting our money where our legislative mouth is to give effect to this legislation. That is a legitimate concern for everyone. It's a simple question: How are we going to pay for this? I wish to address that during the course of my comments.

The distinctions between the two pieces of legislation are very dramatic.

At the outset, I want to put on the record some of the fine qualities contained in this legislation. It, at the outset, involves the private sector for the first time, and on that point we all agree. It raises the amount of penalties for non-compliance. As you know, my legislation called for \$50,000 fines; the minister chose not to proclaim that, which is another issue that I'll get into later. But the fines now are at a \$100,000 threshold for corporations and \$50,000 for individuals.

This bill, however, introduces exemptions, a significant number of them, and multiple appeal mechanisms. OK, there has to be a degree of flexibility, but I had never envisioned a situation where a minister had an unfettered right to create whole classes of people who would get exemptions. Perhaps she's getting different advice from the same set of bureaucrats who gave me advice, but this was an area that the old bill did not wish to go into, and I was pleased about that.

Another good thing about this bill is that it sets out a 20-year time frame. I'm not going to argue on this point. My colleague from Trinity—Spadina has some strong views on this. My point is somewhat different. To get to the point immediately, if David Lepofsky says 20 years is incidental to the issue here, that it's primarily how the process is established that will measure our success—"not to get fixated" were his exact words on the 20 years—I accept that as well.

**2020**

Where I have difficulty is that within the context of 20 years, we're going to have one-size-fits-all. This is a fundamental difference that I felt strongly about when drafting Bill 125. I believe the government has a primary responsibility to show leadership in this area. The public who feel discriminated against will on occasion undertake a lawsuit against an individual company or a person

because they are being discriminated against. But when entire governments fail to respond to these issues, that is a reflection on how poorly we are accommodating our most vulnerable citizens. I fundamentally believe that the government has a responsibility to get its own house in order before it dictates, taxes, lectures or litigates people into compliance.

Perhaps I was affected by my experience with my first leader, Frank Miller, who brought in employment equity, an issue for the disability community. He indicated that that should be considered for the government first and then move to the private sector, so that the government would absorb the costs of understanding how to deal with new legislation that breaks new ground, that tears down old barriers and creates expectations that are both fair and reasonable but costly. So Bill 125, which will, upon third reading of this, cease to exist in this province, contained some very strong language and some very clear legal requirements for the government of Ontario to uphold in defence of the needs of disabled persons in our province, and those will evaporate with the passing of Bill 118.

I believe that one of the differences is that in Bill 118, this legislation now becomes negotiated. More frequently than not, we will be negotiating at a table. We're told that as many as 26 different accessibility standards committees could be developed over the next few years and that the private sector, business, organizations, classes of individuals and, yes, the disability community will be able to sit down and discuss and negotiate—in effect, arm-wrestle—these rights. Why? Because, as my friend from Trinity-Spadina so eloquently put it, this bill isn't about guarantees and protection for the disability community; this is a bill for everybody, and it's just as important, in the wording of this legislation, that we accommodate the needs of the disabled community as it is to ensure that we accommodate the private sector in its ability to pay. That's clear in the language of this legislation, and that is something that I don't think was originally intended.

The old legislation obligates the government of Ontario in an absolute fashion, and this legislation removes that. It removes it not only ministry by ministry but removes responsibility from the government of Ontario to deal with a whole host of issues, from tabling accessibility plans—which, in my view, are powerful instruments because they expose to the public what the government is or is not doing on its journey to becoming a fully accessible and barrier-free province.

Not only that, but there were special provisions built into Bill 125 that guarantee—I'll quote directly from Bill 125, because this is one of the 57 amendments that the member for Trinity-Spadina and I tabled. Under "Government employees" in the current legislation, it says, "The government of Ontario shall accommodate the accessibility needs of its employees in accordance with the Human Rights Code to the extent that the needs relate to their employment." You have no idea the amount of grief I went through to get that into this legislation. Why? Because it obligates the government to a higher standard

when treating with its employees who are disabled in order to accommodate them.

So there's concern when we table that specific recommendation and amendment and it's defeated by the Liberal government members. If that isn't a clear signal of some of the concerns we have, I don't know where there is a clearer signal. Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Keith Norton has published two landmark reports in the last two and a half years, and those reports clearly set out that when it comes to the building code, we have a duty to accommodate to a level higher than the building code. He has set that out in a well-researched, well-consulted document which has the commissioner's approval to being compliant with a level of accommodation that removes discrimination for citizens in our province. Again, one of the 57 amendments we tabled was that we would embrace that standard, yet that was defeated by the Liberal government.

I have concerns that the old legislation gives authority to the accessibility standards committee, as it exists today in this province, to create codes, regulations, standards, penalties, all of the things that the disability community has asked for—that those levers and decisions be vested with individuals who themselves are disabled. That is contained in the current ODA in this province. The subtle but significant difference with Bill 118 from the Liberals is that that responsibility now rests solely with the bureaucrats in the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, and then, and only then, on the direction of the minister. So the ability to generate penalties, standards, codes, and regulations which could emanate from the disability community is no longer going to be available to them.

That's not to say that accessibility standards committees will not have individuals from the disability community working on those standards. But imagine what their life is going to be like, discussing issues at one of the 26 tables. First of all, there will be the fact that the private sector will be sitting there telling them what they can't afford. They'll have a minister just outside the door saying, "Well, you know, I can give this class an entire exemption if we find it to be a little too difficult financially." And you've got two tribunal processes that will be set up immediately that will allow the decisions to be appealed if, for whatever reason, they don't feel that they can accommodate the disabled community and they feel that those requirements are too stringent, too difficult. In most cases, the argument is always financial. So I'm concerned when I look at how the original elements of the first legislation, which was a pure empowerment model, have shifted now to a negotiated outcome for establishing a variety of standards.

The second fundamental difference is that all of these standards had to be approved by the Ontario accessibility council and the final determination was vested with the Accessibility Advisory Council of Ontario, made up of a majority of disabled persons. That no longer exists in this legislation. It rests with the minister, getting advice from an accessibility council that can comment on the standards to which they're not a participant.



The old legislation talked about empowering the accessibility advisory councils to implement the act, something for which this legislation doesn't give them authority, to prepare regulations—again, Bill 118 doesn't do that. It allows them to be an independent voice to advise the government on access to services, on access to employment opportunities by economic sector. Again, these were amendments after amendments from the old bill that we asked be placed in this legislation.

The ODA committee and their large volume of recommendations—I'm not going to take tonight to read through them all. They're well known to people across Ontario who have been concerned about this legislation. They recommended that those elements be retained, yet 57 amendments tabled by my friend from Trinity-Spadina and myself were not accepted.

The list goes on. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, which is a group of bureaucrats, is required under the legislation, on page 14, to "consult ... with the Accessibility Advisory Council of Ontario, persons with disabilities and those other persons and organizations that the Minister directs to develop codes, codes of conduct, formulae, standards, guidelines, protocols and procedures related to the subject matter of this act." That, as well, has been removed in this legislation.

2030

Perhaps one of the sections that concerned me the most is that the penalties section will not take effect in this province for many, many years. The original legislation called for the government to proclaim that early. I'm saddened to say that the current minister, Minister Bountrogianni, has chosen not to proclaim the penalties section. When you don't proclaim a penalties section, people's conduct is very, very predictable. As you know, under the old legislation, every municipality in the province must file an accessibility plan, something they are no longer required to do under Bill 118. But the failure of this government to proclaim the section—it's the only section of the bill they didn't proclaim, incidentally; the entire Bill 125 has been proclaimed except for the penalty. I know why we didn't proclaim it, day one. It was because it would be unfair to go in and charge the Ministry of Health, for example, for not filing an access plan, or to charge the city of Hamilton for not filing a plan, because they hadn't had time to create their plan. So we said, "We'll give you one full year. You go and do your plan and then, if you don't file a plan, it's an automatic \$50,000 fine." Also, we empowered the access council to establish all the regulations and guidelines that would govern the conduct of those accessibility advisory councils in communities all across Ontario.

In the first year that the ODA was fully implemented, between 86% and 90% of all municipalities that were required to, filed their access plans. Within the first six months of the new Liberal government, because there was no penalties clause imposed, I'm told reliably from members of the access council, fewer than 34% of municipalities have filed their access plans. Now, it is a bit of a futile exercise, because Bill 118, which will

become law fairly soon when it's proclaimed, doesn't require municipalities to file annual accessibility plans, to make them available to their communities. They get to wait now until the minister says, "You know what, municipalities? You can bide your time. At some point we'll get around to having an accessibility standards committee dealing with municipal services. It might be 10 years from now, five years from now." We do know that it's not on the list of the first three that the minister has indicated publicly, which might be her first three choices. So we may not get around to imposing regulatory change on municipalities for 10 or 12 years. So the access plans were the key that the disability community asked for. They're gone. But worse than that is the fact that the accessibility plans for all government agencies in the province have been jettisoned and removed from this legislation.

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** That's not true, is it, really?

**Mr. Jackson:** It's absolutely true.

If you look at the government of Ontario Web site, every single ministry of the government is required to file an accessibility plan, to be held accountable not only to the employees who work on a daily basis in this province as public servants, but also to the people of Ontario who receive those services.

I did a review of the access plans for the first year of the Liberal government and I have stated in this Legislature on a couple of occasions my dismay when I saw—and, frankly, you've got to give the minister credit for being honest. He had taken \$75,000 out of his previous year's access plan because he needed it for other programs, and he was delaying his schedule of refurbishing and retrofitting courthouses in the province so they could be more accessible to victims and their families who were simply seeking justice in Ontario courts. It's a stroke of genius on the part of the government to eliminate every single reference to a responsibility of the government of Ontario. In fact, the entire section that I put in Bill 125 has been removed, in spite of the fact that my colleague from Trinity-Spadina supported that it be put back in. I don't think that's progress.

To be fair, I think it's more than appropriate that the private sector is embraced by this legislation. I think it's wonderful that we've got a 20-year time frame, and God only knows, if we can do it sooner, all the better. But removing the responsibility of the government of Ontario to establish standards in accordance with the Human Rights Code, to establish standards to ensure that we accommodate each and every civil servant and public servant in this province, in this workplace here at Queen's Park and in services across Ontario—an amendment the Liberal members voted against.

It's not just municipalities and the government that get a by in this legislation. Hospitals have been removed. Hospitals no longer have to file an accessibility plan. If the truth be known, hospitals were doing a very poor job in this area. They historically consider themselves to be at arm's length from everything. In particular, it's dis-

heartening to see that some hospitals are doing a wonderful job, but many hospitals are struggling with their budgets. That's not an editorial comment; I'm simply saying that with the immense amount of capital construction going on in Ontario, you would have thought they would be establishing their new buildings to the higher standard that was set out in Bill 125 and which has now been removed. It's no longer required that, automatically, new leases, new government buildings and retrofitting of old government buildings must be done to the higher standard. That has been removed from this legislation; the current legislation is silent.

I have a long list of clauses and amendments that were sought by the minister in the open consultation process and that were asked for when we went to public hearings. They are reinforced by a substantive report prepared by the ODA Committee and its leadership, David Lepofsky and Patti Bregman. I want to go through a couple of these. These are amendments that were tabled that were defeated by the government.

The first one was referred to by my colleague from Trinity-Spadina, and that was on the simple principle that we should be creating a barrier-free Ontario for persons with disabilities. I'm at a loss to understand why this phrase is so threatening to the Liberal government.

**Mr. Marchese:** It was their motion in opposition.

**Mr. Jackson:** It was their motion in opposition, as my colleague says. It was in every single resolution by every single municipality in the province. I'm looking at five, six or seven members who, prior to the last provincial election, served on a municipal council and set their own hand and oath that they were going to move toward a barrier-free Ontario. Yet now, in the transition from municipal government to provincial government, all of a sudden this is a part of our lexicon that has been forbidden to be uttered in this legislation.

2040

I fundamentally believe that this legislation should be about the disabled community and the rights they require, as much as I think we should have brought in a crime victims' bill for everyone in the province. I wouldn't have watered that bill down. I've brought seven or eight bills here, and they've always been dedicated to the very people they purport to help.

But the government was insistent that this is legislation for the entire province. They weren't talking about geography; they were talking about the fact that somehow this will accommodate everybody. This gets back to the fundamental point I'm worried about. The ability for the private sector to pay is, in and of itself, an accessibility issue—for them. But because this bill is for everybody, they need to be accommodated, and the minister has accommodated them very well. There are two different appeal mechanisms. There is an entire *carte blanche* approach: Unvetted, unsupervised, just with a stroke of a pen, any minister can say, "That group is exempt." I'll give you the one that bothers me the most. I want to be upfront about this, because, having spent three or four years of my life working on legislation like this,

you come away with very clear ideas of where the largest impediments are. I'll tell you the number one.

The minister indicated that she wants to deal with public transportation. I have seen financial reports about the cost of making our GO Transit system in this province fully accessible. We are talking, not hundreds of million dollars, but over a billion dollars. I am quite convinced that one of the first exemptions we're going to have to consider will be GO Transit. I hope I'm wrong, but I know I got a tremendous amount of grief and heartache from the Ministry of Transportation when I brought in Bill 125. They said, "Minister, you will obligate us within the first 10 years to make GO Transit accessible." I said, "What is your point?"

Either we are committed to this or we're not. I don't think government should have the authority to take itself off the hook but then obligate other people, simply because they pay taxes and we spend them. We will on the one hand give them two cents on every dollar for gasoline and say, "Get out there and help your public transit." Are they then going to turn around within a couple of months and say, "You know what? You have to make your transit systems fully accessible. All that money, plus more, is going to have to go to accessibility." I hope that's the case, but is that what's going to happen? We don't know. We have no guarantees that that's going to happen.

There are sections where we called for amendments that dealt with no public reporting, and again it was an NDP motion defeated. No open public meetings: ODAC requested an amendment, but again it was defeated by the Liberals.

We asked for early government regulations. I am told that the accessibility advisory committee had been working for six months on standards, and there are standards all over the place. Let's be honest about this. There are standards in municipalities, the Canadian Standards Association, building code upgrades: They're all over the place. One of the problems I had was that there are so bloody many of them. So pulling all this together, you needed to have someone with the responsibility to make that decision, and that was the access advisory council. They were ready to have those regulations done, I'm told, and I don't see any reason they would have lied to me. But all that work was stopped. In fairness, the Liberals won the last election. The minister has the right to say, "I want to turn your attention away from the work you're doing on the ODA," which she has done for the last 20 months, "and we're going to work on this Bill 118."

By the end of this year, we would have been starting the five-year review, under the ODA, holding government accountable, which brings me to another point. Under the old legislation, every five years the members of this House, regardless of which side of the House you were on or whether it was a majority or a minority government, would have cause to have the legislation brought back for debate and review on the floor of this Legislature. That doesn't exist. It won't happen for 20 years. The minister specifically has exclusive right to



determine which sections of which legislation will be reviewed. Again, that's something that I believe the disability community was looking for and wanting because, quite frankly, they've seen governments come and go and they have not seen the kind of forward progress they had hoped for.

David Lepofsky and the committee talked extensively about an accessibility standards adviser and developing an independent audit. Efforts in this area—we tabled the recommendations and they were defeated. So any degree of independence to audit the activity have been voted against by government members.

I have to move quickly here. There are no mandatory guidelines for purchasing municipal goods and services. That's another one in the legislation. Again, the current legislation obligates municipalities. This has been specifically removed, and the amendment that we tabled was defeated.

An accessibility plan for employees: My colleague from Trinity-Spadina spoke eloquently to that.

There is no requirement for public transportation organizations—the list keeps getting longer. Colleges and universities are no longer required to file accessibility plans in Ontario. Public transportation organizations of all stripes and sizes had to require—incidentally, what is interesting about this is that this did include the private sector. So when people said, “Cam, your bill never included the private sector,” it did when it came to transit.

Perhaps one of the larger concerns we had was that we even tried making our provincial and municipal elections fully accessible. This was of concern to me. I put it in the original legislation. The bureaucrats went crazy on me again. They didn't want to do anything that would interfere with the Elections Act. I said, “All right, then, at least for the next provincial election, require the Chief Election Officer to perform certain review functions and come back to the Legislature with recommendations.” It's right in the legislation. And when we asked an order paper question, they said, “No, he didn't do it. It wasn't done.” How is it then that we had a law that obligated a piece of legislation, and an officer who reports independently to this House did not do the report? So I put stronger legislation in, supporting my colleague from the NDP, and the government defeated it. They believe that every disabled person in the province is going to vote for them in the next election. Fair ball. So why not make it easier for them? But even the Liberals voted against making Ontario provincial and municipal elections barrier-free. I know, because I had a report that told me how much it would cost. That's not the issue. Why is it that we don't want to give them that?

I want to close on an issue which I consider to be of the greatest importance of all, and that is the separation of the standards of the Human Rights Code and this legislation. We worked very hard to make that a reality, and I am deeply disappointed and disturbed that that standard will not be used; it will be negotiated. As far as I'm concerned, matters that appear before the Human Rights Commission should not be negotiable. Much has been

said about the funding for this department, and I know that while I was Minister of Citizenship, I increased their funding and strengthened their mandate. It was very controversial, but I fundamentally believe in the good work of that office and I trust implicitly the leadership, both of the board and its chief commissioner.

I'm very pleased to be able to say that this legislation will move forward and I'm pleased to be able to support it. I deeply regret that it doesn't go as far as it had the potential to go, and I am quite confident that we will be back, at some time in the future, trying to fix this bill again.

**2050**

**Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I'm extremely pleased to speak to this bill. This has been an awfully long time coming. From a historical perspective, it was in 1995 that the Premier at that time, Premier Harris, committed to pass a bill within his first term. That didn't happen. Then it was re-promised in 1999, and a bill was passed that, quite frankly, didn't do anything. I'll get into some more details on that. If time is of the essence for individuals who have a disability, they should have had a bill 10 years ago. That's when it was first promised. I had the privilege—and it was an absolute privilege—to be a critic for persons with disabilities during that time. Bill 125 was introduced, and in a very hurried manner consultations were held across Ontario. I say “very hurried”—I believe they were held over a period of three days.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Three days?

**Mr. Parsons:** Three or four days; no more than four, but it was held in one week.

We had a significant number of people who came out under some difficulties, because they had to make arrangements for transportation or for an interpreter or translator. One of the questions that I asked virtually every group that presented—and it's unfortunate that the member from Burlington, as minister, wasn't able to attend any of those consultations—was “Does this bill make your life better?” I believe, with virtually no exceptions—I think there was one person who said, “Yes. I think this bill does.” The others said, “No, this bill will not make it better.” So the community of people with disabilities very clearly did not support the first bill, not because of where it came from but because it was not a bill that would improve their lives and remove barriers for them.

In contrast to that, I had the opportunity to participate in many of the hearings on Bill 118, and the groups came applauding the bill. Certainly there were some concerns. That's why we held consultations, to hear what the citizens of Ontario thought, but the vast majority indicated that they thought this bill was a tremendous improvement. I believe it was an improvement because consultations were held with them prior to the bill being drafted.

There are so many people who can claim credit for this bill, but I have to acknowledge David Lepofsky, who has been like a pit bull on this issue, absolutely com-

mitted to making things better. After third reading of this bill, I'm not sure what Mr. Lepofsky will do with his time, because I think he's been devoting about 27 hours a day to it, each and every day.

The community very clearly said to us that this was a bill they could support. I regret that the official opposition believes it needs to wait until the budget. Why I say I regret that is, first of all, the Americans, many years before us, passed an Americans with Disabilities Act, and they passed it during a significant recession in their economy, but they said it was necessary at that time.

I'm always intrigued when someone says to me, "This bill will mean that a restaurant will have to incur the expense of making their washroom accessible." I don't understand that, because if I owned a restaurant, it would be a given that I would have a washroom available for my customers.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** All of them.

**Mr. Parsons:** All of them; each and every one of them. The right to a washroom is a right. It's not a luxury, it's not an option; these are basic, fundamental rights.

This bill isn't a bill that says we're going to give one group of Ontarians more rights and privileges than another group. Quite the opposite: This bill says we're going to level the playing field because everyone in Ontario is entitled to the same rights and privileges, and that's what this bill does. If it costs money to make a washroom accessible, it costs money. That's part of the deal, folks, because it's an entitlement that should have been in place years and years ago.

In my conversation with industry, they've indicated to me that they support the bill, and the part they like is that it levels the playing field for them. They know all their competitors will incur the same expenses and they will all be in exactly the same position from an economic viewpoint. Interestingly, 10 years after the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, they did a survey of businesses and industry, and 75% of the businesses said they spent less than \$500 to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act—not significant money.

I would suggest this bill should not have had to go to time allocation, because it is a bill that is a human rights issue.

I like the way it operates, and I'm a little bit intrigued by some of the comments made earlier. We're hearing that 20 years is too long. Quite frankly, it's not that we're going to start implementing the bill in 20 years. That's a completion date. It's the last possible date. At the same time, we're hearing it will cost too much money. So this bill, to me, is a wonderful compromise that recognizes that it is much easier to remove some barriers than others. It will take some time to do, it will take some time from the viewpoint of finances, but it will also take some time because this bill provides for significant input from individuals with disabilities to give us advice.

I have shared the story where I spent a day in a wheelchair. I learned things that I never imagined before. I never expected the ramps, which look really easy to get

up, to be as extremely difficult as they are and how problems are presented when you get into a restaurant and the tables may be accessible but they're too high for a chair.

What I particularly like about this bill is the groups in the definition of disabilities. It is so tempting to focus on mobility issues, and this is not to downplay them in any sense. This bill applies to virtually every challenge that could face an individual: it deals with physical disability, it deals with mental impairment, learning disability and mental disorder. We have many individuals who suffer from invisible disabilities in this province. This bill incorporates rights and privileges for each and every one of them, and I'm very proud of that.

This bill is profoundly different from Bill 125 in that this bill applies to every aspect of a citizen's life. The longer we get away from the passing of Bill 125, the better the bill sounds. Bill 125 was a hollow bill. It was applied to municipalities, with no enforcement and so much of it was advice. Sure, it was reviewed every five years or whatever, but it didn't change life for anyone. For individuals who have a disability in Ontario, as much as it may be important to get into a municipal office building, it is more important to have accommodation and have access to stores and doctors' offices and hospitals and every aspect. Every place that those of us without a disability have a right to enter and every challenge facing any of us has to be levelled to provide the same opportunities for other citizens. This bill does that. This bill deals with individuals the previous bill absolutely ignored.

This bill incorporates timelines for the minister to respond. This bill incorporates standards and enforcement. But the tone of the bill isn't, "Do this or else." The bill provides a process that allows for advice to be given, for information to be given to groups that don't conform. For many groups that don't conform now, I believe they don't conform because they're not truly aware of what they could do to improve access for their fellow citizens. This bill does that.

When this legislature—and I was sitting on that side—passed Bill 125, it struck me that that bill probably exemplifies why the vast majority of the members are here in this chamber, no matter what side they're on. They're here to make life better for citizens of Ontario and for our communities. I left this chamber after the government at that time forced through Bill 125, and I was ashamed because I felt the public was being misled by the government at that time which announced the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, "Now you have rights and now you're in the driver's seat," when in fact it applied to very few points.

If this bill passes, I am going to leave this chamber tomorrow proud of what this party has done and what this minister has done. This is a bill that will truly improve lives for literally thousands and thousands of people. That's why we're here. This bill was put together with great sensitivity and advice, and I believe it will profoundly help so very many people. I'm proud of this government and I'm proud of this bill, and I believe the



citizens of Ontario will recognize that this is a bill that does something that improves lives.

2100

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** It gives me great pleasure to speak to this bill. I'm one of the new members to the Legislature who had the opportunity to serve on the committee that held the hearings. I wasn't in the Legislature when Bill 125 came to pass, but I was in Ontario and I do remember that there was a pretty public hue and cry from the disability community that Bill 125 didn't cut it; it wasn't adequate. I think it's very telling that in the submission to the committee by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, they basically said, in laying out the changes they'd like to see in the bill, "It should not be inferred from the number of our proposed amendments that this isn't a good bill," speaking of Bill 118. That's the starting point, where we began.

I want to congratulate the minister for having created this bill, having put together this bill that was seen as a good starting point, before it was amended, by the disability community. Then I want to remind my colleagues opposite that we accepted 41 amendments, three of which were opposition amendments. So this bill was changed as a result of the hearings around the province.

As a new member to the process, I just have a couple of comments that I want to make about some of the issues that were raised by the opposition members, especially some of the issues raised around the timing of this bill. It seems to me that we want to get this bill in place as quickly as possible. We want to get the standards development committees set. We want to get the standards in place. That's the goal, certainly of the minister, as I understood it: to get the bill in place as soon as possible.

To hear the opposition members speak, it was as though it wasn't our goal to move quickly. I remember sitting through a number of hours of debate about the number of days of hearings that we would have. On the government side, we were very committed to having as many days as we could arrange. Mr. Jackson was not in favour of more days. He wanted fewer days. Mr. Jackson extended the clause-by-clause to five days of debate, which, to my mind, was not necessary; the points were made and remade. So it seemed to me, again, as a new member who is new to these procedures, that there was not a particular willingness on the part of the opposition to move ahead, to be expeditious, to get the bill going and to get the standards development committees in place. To me, that was disheartening. It was disheartening that we couldn't move ahead more quickly.

As far as the issue about the budget, I want to follow up on what my colleague Mr. Parsons said. The passage of this bill should not be dependent on a budget. What we're talking about here is changing a culture. We're talking about changing a culture of understanding of what accessibility is. We don't have a choice about that. I believe that we have to move forward on this so that everyone in Ontario can have access to the services they need. To my mind, this is not an issue about a particular

budget or not. This is a bill that needs to be put in place so that we can change the culture of this province.

I want to acknowledge a couple of people in my own riding, individual advocates like Audrey King and Sharon Dever, and my own niece Amy Honeyman, for whom this bill particularly needs to be in place. But the issue about it being in place for all Ontarians is this: Ontario will be a stronger place and we will be a stronger citizenry if we remove barriers for people with disabilities. To my mind, that's why this bill is about everyone in Ontario, because we will, as a province, be a better place. I think that is exactly why this bill is targeted at all Ontarians, not to mention the fact that we will all at some point have a disability of one kind or another as we age. But I think the issue is that the province will be stronger if we remove barriers.

The member for Trinity-Spadina talked about this bill being an attempt to remove barriers, and his fear is that the barriers will still remain. My response would be that that's not a reason not to have a vision of a barrier-free Ontario, that's not a reason not to put standards in place so that we can move toward getting those barriers removed. That's what this bill is about.

The other fundamental for me is that this bill is about putting standards in place, enforcing them, inspecting so that the standards are being met. It's not about filing plans. The member for Burlington has gone on at some length about how the plans he thinks should be filed may not be filed in the future. The point is that for years now the plans have been filed and nothing has changed for the people who need those barriers to be removed. So if we don't have standards in place in this province, standards against which everyone's behaviour—every facility, every institution—can be measured and inspectors can say that the standard is being met or it's not being met—it's not the filing of a plan; it's the meeting of a standard that's required, and that's what this legislation is about. That's why this legislation has teeth, and that's why everybody who came before us in the hearings said, "This is a good bill. It's a good start."

There was always a positive comment. This was not a process where in the hearings we heard that we were on the wrong track. We heard that we were on the right track. Yes, there were people who would like it to move more quickly, would like the standards to be in place more quickly. But the reality is that, as my colleague Mr. Parsons said, there is a balance between the cost of changing behaviours and changing facilities, and the need to move quickly. Again, this is a piece of balanced legislation that is going to allow us as a province to move toward that vision of a barrier-free Ontario.

There were a number of issues raised by the previous speakers; for example, the issue of exemptions. We put an amendment in place that will clarify the reasons for any exemptions being made. That, again, was something that we heard from people: It should be clear what the exemptions are and why those exemptions are being made.

We also amended the bill to require the hiring of inspectors. That was something we heard over and over

again. We amended the bill to ensure that the terms of reference for the standards development committees will be public and that there will be minutes taken at the meetings so that the process will be increasingly transparent.

We went out to the province. We had a bill that was good to start out with, by the telling of the people for whom it will be the most important. We amended that bill with 41 amendments, and I think we've now got a vision of where we need to go, we've got a blueprint to move forward on. Those standards development committees are going to be very, very—it's going to be a very difficult process. It is not easy to change the attitudes and change the understanding of what accessibility means in the province and to remove those barriers. It's a complex process. So those standards development committees in each of the sectors need to get up and running. The minister has indicated that certain ones that are ready to go will be in place sooner than others, and then the changes will begin to be made within the five years. For the members from Burlington and Trinity-Spadina to suggest that will be a 20-year process is misconstruing what's actually said in the bill. Within five years of standards being in place, those changes have to be made.

I am very happy to support this bill. I think this bill will ensure that Ontario will be a stronger place for all of our citizens, and I'm looking forward to a quick passage and—no thanks to the members of the opposition—we're going to get this bill through so we can get started on developing standards.

**The Acting Speaker:** I think the time has been exhausted.

Mr. Duncan has moved government motion 370, related to time allocation.

Shall the motion pass? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2110 to 2120.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Matthews, Deborah

Mauro, Bill  
McNeely, Phil  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Miller, Norm  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Murdoch, Bill  
Oraziotti, David  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Parsons, Ernie  
Patten, Richard  
Qadri, Shafiq

Racco, Mario G.  
Ramal, Khalil  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sandals, Liz  
Smith, Monique  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wong, Tony C.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 34; the nays are 0.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It now being close enough to 9:30, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

*The House adjourned at 2122.*



## STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

### **Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

### **Finance and economic affairs / Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

### **General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

### **Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

### **Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

### **Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

### **Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

### **Regulations and private bills / Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

### **Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

## CONTENTS

Monday 9 May 2005

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

<b>Time allocation, government notice of motion number 370, <i>Mr. Duncan</i></b>	
Mr. Duncan .....	6921
Mr. Runciman .....	6922
Ms. Horwath .....	6923
Ms. Bountrogianni.....	6924
Mr. Dunlop.....	6927
Mr. Marchese .....	6927
Mr. Ramal .....	6932
Mr. Jackson .....	6933
Mr. Parsons .....	6937
Ms. Wynne .....	6939
Agreed to.....	6940

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 9 mai 2005

### MOTIONS ÉMANANT DU GOUVERNEMENT

<b>Attribution de temps, avis de motion numéro 370 émanant du gouvernement, <i>M. Duncan</i></b>	
M. Marchese.....	6927
M. Ramal.....	6932
M. Jackson .....	6933
Adoptée .....	6940





No. 143

N° 143

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 10 May 2005

Mardi 10 mai 2005

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone: 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.

---

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 10 May 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka):** I would like to draw attention to the Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund application made by the town of Gravenhurst in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Gravenhurst applied for \$1.8 million for a variety of road projects, including street widenings, building of hydro lines and the construction of sidewalks. The Gravenhurst COMRIF application was turned down by this government. The town received no explanation from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Each and every municipal representative I've spoken with has had the same complaint. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has provided absolutely no information on why applications were denied. Instead, communities like Gravenhurst, Kearney, Elk Lake, Rainy River, Iroquois Falls, Smooth Rock Falls, Blind River and Thunder Bay all received a Dear John letter. As Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson said, "I need to know what, if anything, we didn't do, as well as what we could have done in terms of the application form [and] in terms of matching up to have a better chance next time."

It is unacceptable that the minister did not provide any rationale for denying COMRIF applications. Several of the communities I have mentioned face environmental cautions and work orders; others cite health and safety reasons as the grounds for their applications.

I would like to ask the minister again, why won't your ministry provide any guidance or advice on how these communities can improve their applications for future rounds of funding?

#### WORLD LUPUS DAY

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Today is World Lupus Day. This is an important day for Lupus Canada as they try to educate us about this disease. Over 50,000 men, women and children in Canada are affected by this disease, but the primary target for this disease seems to be women of child-bearing age.

Lupus is an autoimmune disease that causes the immune system to attack the body's healthy cells, causing

tissue damage, organ failure and even, in the most severe cases, death. It attacks the skin, the muscles, the blood vessels and vital organs like the heart, lungs and kidneys. A good friend of mine, Mr. Jack Szeman, continues to fight lupus today in a brave, brave fight. It is a hard disease to diagnose, since symptoms vary and mimic other diseases, but there is good news: Early detection and treatment can help slow the debilitating effects and minimize those symptoms.

I want to end by thanking a young 15-year-old in my riding for reminding me of the devastating effects of lupus. Let us use her own words: "I just wanted to let you know that May 10th is World Lupus Day. Not many people know about lupus but it's something that people should know about because it is such a complex disease. And even though I'm only 15 and I should not have this until I'm like 40, unfortunately I do. And so do other kids in the world. If you could help me make this day more aware to people"—I would do so, and I can try to do my best.

Maggie McNiven, thank you for the work that you're doing to raise our awareness of lupus. I would encourage all of us in this House to learn more by visiting the Web site [www.lupuscanada.org](http://www.lupuscanada.org).

#### ROMANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I am pleased to do a statement today concerning Romanian Independence Day.

Today, May 10, is the day that many Romanians celebrate as Romanian Independence Day. The kingdom of Romania was proclaimed on May 10, 1866, with Carol I as its first king. The new Constitution was then proclaimed and Romania became a constitutional monarchy.

The Romanian people suffered greatly in the decades that followed, and were robbed of their independence many times. However, they never lost hope in a better future. Their strong faith in themselves and in their country was, no doubt, inspired by the events of May 10, 1866.

I am proud to say that Romania's contemporary monarch, King Michael of Romania, is also a relative of Queen Elizabeth II and is even in line to our throne.

At noon today, I helped to raise the Romanian flag at the courtesy flagpole outside the Legislature for a brief period. The Romanian tricolour flag flies over the Parliament of Ontario as a tribute to the bravery, the courage and the rich heritage of the Romanian nation, a heritage proudly borne by all Romanian Canadians. I am very

pleased to say this today and to contribute to Romanian Independence Day.

#### MEMBER FOR TORONTO-DANFORTH

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I came to work today and on my desk was a press release from Marilyn Churley. Marilyn Churley, who we all know in the Legislature as a fighter, as a feminist, as an environmentalist, has announced that she is going to be seeking the nomination for the federal riding of Beaches-East York.

I have to tell you I have very mixed feelings, because I remember how this woman fought so ferociously against the amalgamation of our municipality in this Legislature. I remember when she fought to maintain our civic centre when some of those new amalgamated councillors wanted to sell it off and how she fought so much to make sure that democracy returned to East York by having our third councillor actually pass in this Legislature.

We wish her well in Beaches-East York, as New Democrats, as people in the east end of the city of Toronto and in East York. We wish her well because we know that she will make a real difference in Ottawa. She will fight for what the people of this city and this province and this country really and truly believe in. She will do it in her own beautiful and wonderful style. We will miss her very much in this House, but her future is there and I know every member wishes her well.

#### HAMILTON REGIONAL HERITAGE FAIR

**Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek):** Just before I give my member's statement, I want to add my words of congratulations to a member who is a very hard-working parliamentarian. I admire the work that she has done.

On Friday of last week, I took a bit of time out of my regular appointments to visit a school fair, the Hamilton Regional Heritage Fair, being held at the Dofasco Recreation Centre in my riding. The fair featured the projects and displays of approximately 120 kids from grades 4 to 8. I was absolutely blown away by the creativity, the imagination and the insight that was displayed in these projects.

The idea was to choose a subject that played an integral role in our Canadian history. The variety and subject matter was absolutely amazing: from Metis leader Louis Riel to rock drummer Neil Peart; from the story of one young slave girl making her way through the Underground Railroad to Roberta Bondar's journey into outer space; from the fur trade to the Canadarm; from maple syrup to Tim Hortons.

1340

I learned a lot about our country that morning and I learned a lot about our young students. As Education Minister Gerard Kennedy says, those kids are a lot smarter than we were—and, I would say, at times are. They also deserve the best that we can give them through our public education and post-secondary education sys-

tems. Those are two top priorities, I'm glad to say, of this government.

Just a quick plug for the 2005 Ontario Provincial Fairs Showcase: It's coming up May 20 in my riding of Stoney Creek at the Dofasco centre, and I highly recommend a visit to get a good take on our past and our future all at once.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** Yesterday we heard of yet another example of Dalton McGuinty's total mismanagement. The deal that Mr. McGuinty got from Paul Martin on the weekend in reality does not even exist. The McGuinty Liberals simply make it up as they go along.

Mr. McGuinty shook hands with the Prime Minister on Saturday and raved about great progress, but when the smoke lifted and the deal was dissected, the devil was in the details. No, wait—there were no details. This deal was old news. Mr. McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have hung their hats on a deal that was struck between Paul Martin and Jack Layton weeks ago. In nine hours, Mr. McGuinty was able to sell Ontarians short, shake hands on an increasingly diminishing deal, and prop up his corrupt federal cousins.

This kind of behaviour reminds me of the old barn cat that brings a dead bird to your doorstep. The cat sits there and presents the bird as a present. The problem is, no one wants it.

Dalton, no one is going to swallow your dead bird.

Only Dalton McGuinty and his back-of-a-napkin approach would allow a face-to-face meeting with a minority Prime Minister to be, effectively, wasted time, a spin-doctoring effort devised to benefit two Liberals and their followers. The Premier just continues to say one thing on one day, only to see the real facts come out the next. Ontarians are catching on.

#### EVENTS IN HURON-BRUCE

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce):** I'm very pleased to rise today to speak about all of the wonderful things that are happening in the riding of Huron-Bruce. As you know, I represent one of the most rural ridings in the province, and I'm very proud to talk about some of the recent announcements that we have made for the betterment of rural Ontario.

Recently, Minister Smitherman announced the location of over 50 health teams. Both the Maitland Valley family health team and the Huron county family health team received the good news that a family health team would be coming to their communities. After many months of hard work, their efforts to promote primary health care have paid off.

The provincial government, along with the federal government, recently announced much-anticipated funding from COMRIF. The town of Saugeen Shores, the



municipality of Kincardine, the town of Goderich and the township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh all received funding. These projects included upgrades to water systems and bridge repairs that are essential to the health and safety of these communities. Repairing aging infrastructure in our small communities is critical to our success.

We also recently announced the new funding formula for the Ontario municipal partnership fund, which includes four components, one of them for northern and rural communities in recognition of the unique challenges that we face.

I am proud to represent the riding of Huron-Bruce and a government that understands the needs of rural Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. May I ask members to keep their conversations lower. I can hardly hear the members making their statements.

### FAMILY HEALTH NETWORKS

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I'm pleased to be able to speak in this House today about the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care initiative that I had the pleasure of announcing on behalf of this government and Minister George Smitherman on April 15 at Peterborough's beautiful Royal Gardens residence.

The Peterborough area has the privilege of being the benefactor of five—that's five—new family health teams, including the Greater Peterborough family health team in Chemong; the Peterborough Medical Centre—the Greater Peterborough Health Care Alliance; the Greater Peterborough Clinic family health team—the Greater Peterborough Health Care Alliance; the Peterborough Palliative Plus family health team; and the VON Havelock-Belmont-Methuen family health team. These family health teams include doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals working together to provide comprehensive care day and night, seven days a week. This includes access by phone to a registered nurse.

Family health teams are exactly what our community needs and will ensure that more residents of the greater Peterborough area will receive the health care they need closer to home.

Peterborough's five new family health teams are among the first batch of 52 family health teams and three community network teams approved by the government, serving more than 1.1 million patients in 55 communities across Ontario. The family health team initiative is part of the McGuinty government's comprehensive plan to improve health care in Ontario. It's a plan that includes reduced waiting times for key procedures, increasing the number of doctors and nurses, and investing heavily in community-based health care services.

I'm proud to say that I'm part of a government that is ambitious and proactive and that has the strong foresight to improve Ontario's health care.

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** Nine hours. That's all it took: nine hours. Premier Dalton McGuinty was able to do in nine hours what the parties opposite could not do in 15 years of governing Ontario. In nine hours, our Premier and the Prime Minister were able to hammer out an agreement that will benefit Ontarians for years to come.

Over the next five years, Ontario will get an additional \$5.75 billion to ensure that Ontario can continue to grow stronger and thus contribute to a stronger Canada—not some Laytonesque two-year deal for all of Canada, but a deal for Ontario for five years.

This weekend's meeting saw agreements reached in two major areas of unfairness: immigration and training. We've been waiting for this day for a long time. Ontarians have experienced unfairness in immigration funding since 1991. In the case of training dollars, the problem has existed since 1995.

We've accomplished what the two previous governments combined were not able to do in 15 long years. Under the leadership of our Premier, Ontarians are finally starting to get their fair share.

But this is only the first step. There's much more to do. Going forward, we will work to address the outstanding gap in areas like health care and social programs. Those are just two more areas where we continue to receive less funding than residents in other provinces receive.

Ontarians expect their representatives to fight for them, and that's exactly what we're doing. We're not going to whine and whimper like the member from Kenora-Rainy River; we're not going to say "probably" and "perhaps" like the visiting member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey.

Our Premier is resolved and he gets results. That's what we have today in this province.

### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery Ms. Sandra Anguiano, a member of the State Congress of Colima, Mexico. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guest here today.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 144, An Act to amend certain statutes relating to labour relations / Projet de loi 144, Loi modifiant des lois concernant les relations de travail.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

#### MEMBERS' BIRTHDAYS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** On a point of order, Speaker: I am absolutely sure that everybody in this House wants to sing Rosario Marchese a happy birthday today.

**Interjection:** And Carol Mitchell.

**Mr. Bisson:** And Carol Mitchell. Isn't that interesting? Happy birthday, Rosie and Carol.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Happy birthday.

1350

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to inform members of the historic commitment we are making in partnership with the federal government to help Ontario children and families.

I was honoured to host Prime Minister Martin and Social Development Minister Ken Dryden on Friday at the St. Marguerite d'Youville Children's Centre in Hamilton. Together, we signed an unprecedented agreement in principle for the early learning and care of Ontario's children, a commitment founded on the principles of quality, universal inclusiveness, accessibility and development. These four principles reflect values that are shared not only with the federal government but with every provincial and territorial government from coast to coast, and they are shared by child care workers and advocates, children's health professionals and parents.

In Ontario, these principles are the cornerstones of our Best Start plan. At its core, Best Start is a massive expansion of child care and early learning. That means making more quality, regulated child care spaces available to more families and providing more subsidies so that more families can access those spaces. But it's much more than that. Best Start also includes vital services that help children develop and arrive at school ready to learn: infant screening, hearing programs, speech and language therapy and many other services that support early childhood development. All of these services, including child care, will be available in community hubs in schools so it's easy for parents to take advantage of them.

In the past year, we've already created 4,000 new subsidized spaces and we're moving forward aggres-

sively to provide more quality child care spaces for more Ontario families. Quality, affordable early learning and child care helps prepare our young people to arrive at school ready to learn, thrive and excel.

We are pleased that the federal government is providing Ontario with approximately \$270 million this year to help build a national early learning and care program. That is in addition to the approximately \$570 million that is already provided for child care in Ontario. These are important investments: investments that pay dividends for decades as children grow into productive contributors to Ontario's economy; investments in families whose parents can work outside the home knowing their children are in a quality child care program.

Together, we are creating a seamless system of services for young families and, together, we will see the results: more quality, affordable child care, more parents able to balance the demands of work and family, and more children getting the best possible start in life.

As I looked around that child care centre on Friday, I saw a lot of happy people who have been working on behalf of children for decades. We committed to them that we would work with our partners to deliver a quality, affordable child care program, and that's what we're doing. But the most important commitment is to the thousands of children in Ontario. To them, we are providing a lifelong gift of learning and care. They deserve nothing less.

##### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** In April last year, I announced in the Legislature that the government would reduce the consumption of electricity in buildings it owns by 10% by 2007. Today, I want to provide the House with a progress report on our conservation efforts, including a significant step forward with an innovative technology.

The government of Ontario has reached an agreement with Enwave Energy Corp. to bring deep-lake-water-cooling technology to the government buildings at Queen's Park, including the Legislature, the Frost buildings, the Whitney Block, the Macdonald Block complex and 880 Bay Street. This project is about reducing the demand for electricity that comes from our grid and giving us cleaner air and healthier Ontarians.

When added to the rest of our conservation efforts across government over the past year, deep-lake-water-cooling technology will bring us halfway to our target of reducing electricity consumption in government buildings by 10% by 2007.

Deep-lake-water-cooling technology draws water from deep within Lake Ontario, processes it through heat exchangers and uses it reliably, efficiently and sustainably to cool our offices. Extending this technology from the downtown core to Queen's Park will help us to reduce the amount of electricity we use to cool our buildings by 75%. This means reduced electricity consumption of just under 10 million kilowatt hours beginning in 2007. This



is roughly the amount of energy that is consumed by 1,000 homes. This project is not only good for the environment; it's good for taxpayers. It is estimated that this initiative alone will save the government—taxpayers—\$4.5 million over the next 30 years.

We have also taken other steps since April 1, 2004, to bring us closer to our goal. Last year, I outlined the four main areas of the government's conservation strategy: engaging our 62,000 employees in a government-wide conservation effort, aggressively conserving electricity in buildings we own, cutting back on energy consumption in our leased space, and inviting the public to help us attain our electricity reduction goals. I'm pleased today to say that we are delivering results in each of these areas. And, as I said, with this announcement we are now halfway toward the goal that we set for ourselves.

We have made significant progress. We are in the process of completing 154 conservation projects which, when they are finished, will reduce our electricity consumption by a little over 20 million kilowatt hours annually.

Finally, I want to emphasize that we can all play our own role in conserving energy. Management Board has established an on-line suggestion box at [www.mbs.gov.on.ca](http://www.mbs.gov.on.ca) so the public can submit suggestions about how the government can improve conservation in its operations. If any of the public see lights on in government buildings that you think shouldn't be on, please let us know through our on-line suggestion box. As a small aside, if you are concerned about the lights on in the Frost building—and many members have raised this with me—the budget is under preparation, and for at least the next 24 hours they probably will be on. But be assured that after that, we will be looking at it. We are pleased that the public has been sending us their suggestions.

The government has also engaged its employees in a conservation awareness campaign. We have asked employees to continue to look for ways to save energy, and we're implementing many of their ideas.

The McGuinty government is well on its way to reducing electricity consumption in Ontario government buildings by 10% by 2007. We've taken a significant step forward to give the people of Ontario and our children a cleaner, greener province.

## MAY IS MUSEUM MONTH

### MAI, MOI DES MUSÉES

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** “May Is Museum Month” is an important opportunity to explore our province's past and discover its rich, diverse history. In particular, Ontario's community museums offer a window into our province's past and play a vital role in preserving and protecting local history and heritage.

First launched by the Ontario Museum Association in 2000, May Is Museum Month has grown in scope and size with each passing year. Hundreds of cultural and

heritage organizations across Ontario participate by offering special May Is Museum Month events. Activities and events are listed on the association's Web site.

Cette année, « Mai, Mois des musées » proposera des activités très enrichissantes. L'adoption du projet de loi 60, modifications apportées à la Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario, va stimuler et renouveler le secteur du patrimoine en Ontario. De nombreux musées communautaires sont situés dans des bâtiments patrimoniaux, et la nouvelle Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario, plus musclée, accordera les outils législatifs nécessaires pour mieux protéger des structures qui sont irremplaçables. Les centaines d'événements amusants et éducatifs offerts dans toute la province durant l'opération Mai, Mois des musées, illustre la vitalité de nos musées.

The Royal Ontario Museum's “View of our Future” exhibit profiles the Renaissance ROM initiative from its conceptual beginnings to the most current Studio Daniel Libeskind vision.

Le lieu historique national de Woodside, à Kitchener, présente « Que c'est beau », une exposition mettant en vedette d'étonnantes courtépientes traditionnelles fabriquées par la communauté franco-ontarienne. Le site propose aussi la visite de la maison natale du premier ministre William Lyon Mackenzie King.

Meanwhile, in Stratford, the Stratford Festival Archives, Exhibits and Displays offers an inside look at the costumes, props, art, photos and stage sets from Canada's largest classical repertory theatre.

### 1400

The Perth Museum is offering Ontarians the opportunity to witness an historical re-enactment of the last fatal duel in Canada's history, which took place in Perth in 1833.

Quant au musée de Thunder Bay, il présente « Putin' on the Ritz », un aperçu de la mode dans le nord-ouest de l'Ontario de 1865 à 1945. Plus de 35 robes de bal, de robes de soirée et d'uniformes portés par des hommes et des femmes de la région sont exposés.

Le musée de Timmins a monté une exposition fascinante intitulée « Sur les routes du Bouclier canadien, hier et aujourd'hui ».

Whether one wishes to explore Ontario's social development, its evolution as a manufacturing centre or its cultural development, “May Is Museum Month” offers something for everyone.

J'encourage les Ontariens et les Ontariennes de toute la province à venir visiter les nombreux événements et expositions dans le cadre de l'initiative « Mai, Mois des musées ».

Je profite de cette occasion pour remercier les nombreux organismes de conservation du patrimoine et les centaines de bénévoles situés dans toute la province qui ont fait don de leur temps et de leur énergie toute l'année pour aider à préserver et protéger le riche patrimoine de l'Ontario.

Happy “May Is Museum Month.”

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Responses?

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I'm pleased to rise for the fourth time in the last 20 months to respond to this announcement on the Best Start program that the government is announcing today, thanks to the federal government and its desperate situation. The reason I say that is because there was a failure to reach a national agreement. The minister went out west to do that. But in the last five days, three provinces have agreed to take money in year one.

What's missing in this announcement is that there is no clear dollar commitment in the minister's statement, which is why she will have to explain why she isn't talking about the out-years and the commitment. I do know that in the Best Start plan, the government promised full-day junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, which would cost \$1 billion per year at maturity, in the fourth year. They also promised in their Best Start child care program \$1.9 billion over five years for children under the age of four.

What is also missing in this agreement is the fact that municipalities have not been told whether they are going to have to cough up 20% of the cost, as they do today in Ontario. So we're short on details and we're very high on top-line messaging.

I thought it was summed up best by Andrew Coyne in the National Post, who referred to the provincial Liberal McGuinty government as "The best friends money can buy." He says, "Now, what is the significance of this" daycare "story? That the federal Liberals, after running for four straight elections on the promise of a national daycare system, have made good, just in time for a fifth" election?

It goes on to raise the question: "That, to benefit from this program, parents will be obliged to send their children, not to the daycare providers of their choice, but those of the province's choice (since the money goes, not to parents, but to the province, and thence to providers)" of their choice? And the minister is on record as indicating that that will be predominantly in schools, and we'll see more child care money going into the education system.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I'm pleased to rise to respond to Management Board's announcement today. We're pleased to hear the announcement that Enwave will be extending their cooling system here to Queen's Park and to other government buildings. It is something that Steve Gilchrist, a member of the previous government, was positive on when he was Commissioner of Alternative Energy and when Enwave announced their first projects back in 2001. So we commend the government on doing so.

Energy conservation is a vital part of dealing with the energy needs of Ontario as we go forward, but I want the government to let people be aware that they are talking

about a saving of \$4.5 million over 30 years, which does in fact amount to an average of \$150,000 a year, so let's not overstate just what they are accomplishing here. But it is important that we move, and I think the government has to be on the leading edge of the conservation example here in the province of Ontario.

I must also point out that the plan for energy and energy supply from this government is so full of holes that conservation is going to become an even more important part of it because, as we move forward, the energy supply in the province is very questionable under the leadership of this government.

## MAY IS MUSEUM MONTH

## MAY, MOIS DES MUSÉES

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** I am pleased to join with the minister and all of my colleagues in the House to recognize Museum Month in Ontario.

Ontario's museums are a vital, living reminder of the heritage and history of our province. In the last few years, our museums have entered a great period of revival and expansion. I'm very proud that our PC government, through the SuperBuild program, was able to launch the renewal of so many museums and cultural institutions.

Just last week, I was honoured to be able to tour the Royal Ontario Museum. An investment of \$30 million of SuperBuild money has given the ROM the seed capital to launch a major plan of new construction and renovation. This reconstruction will help the ROM secure its place as one of the world's great museums with a vast increase in display and space.

Museums are not just in big cities, though. Across the province, museums help celebrate local heritage and history. In my own riding, we are proud of such places as the Sharon Temple, Georgina Pioneer Village and the Campbell Museum.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James):** On est très ravi aujourd'hui que la ministre a pris le temps de reconnaître que ce mois, c'est le mois des musées. Mais, madame la Ministre, vous savez autant que nous que les musées à travers cette province ont une pénurie de financement pour être capables de faire leur ouvrage. On sait aussi que ce mois, c'est le mois du budget, non seulement le mois des musées. On s'attend à ce que la ministre ait fait son ouvrage et que demain on va entendre de belles nouvelles faisant affaire avec les musées et qu'on va mettre du nouvel argent pour les musées dans la province de l'Ontario pour les assister à faire leur ouvrage.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** Finally, the goose laid the egg of federal child care funding, and that's a good thing. The problem is, this minister decided to burn the omelette here in Ontario. It's really unfortunate, because this golden opportunity for child care has



been squandered by this minister, who said that she wanted to be the leader in child care for this nation.

Well, guess what? She is far behind the leaders, because she did not commit to a not-for-profit system, which all of the research shows is the appropriate way to get the accountability and the quality in the system. She decided to ignore that research and decided to say, no, we would rather open Ontario up to the big boxes, the big-box child care people who are going to be coming into Ontario as soon as this \$271 million starts to flow. What we didn't hear, though, is when the provincial government is going to put its \$300 million in that they promised back during the previous election. We haven't seen that yet, and we're waiting to see it any time soon.

The problem is, everybody agrees that the minister has ignored all of the research. She says that it's a matter of ideology, but it's not. It's a matter of reality; it's a matter of economics; it's a matter of what we want to see for our children and what is best for the children of the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, this Liberal government is not prepared to put a best start for the children of Ontario.

On behalf of kids and parents and providers, I still stand in my place today to urge this government to follow through on the provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan that have committed to the not-for-profit model, and that we'll at least grandfather existing for-profit. Grandfather them. Keep out the big boxes. The problem is, this minister is opening the floodgates for the for-profit system of child care. That's not what we want in Ontario. We don't want to see our not-for-profits squeezed out by the big corporations, like what happened in the home care model. We know that that has happened. It's experience.

Bottom line: This government voted down its own promises on child care. Whether it is a not-for-profit child care system, the national child benefit clawback or autism services, on all accounts, children have been ignored by this Liberal government.

1410

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I want to reply to the Chair of Management Board, who continues the McGuinty government's exercise of trying to pretend that they've got an electricity policy through spin.

The announcement today is welcomed, but it's very meagre. I invite the minister to read this report by the Pembina Institute, Power for the Future, where they point out no less than a couple of dozen ways in which we should be moving toward energy efficiency, yet we hear nothing from the McGuinty government. Just one example: If you were to retrofit major apartment buildings, you could move, within five years, from using 36,674 gigawatt hours of electricity to only 30,000. But do we have an announcement about energy efficiency for the hundreds, thousands of apartment buildings that were built cheap in the 1960s and 1970s? No.

Then there's the other report, this one by Ralph Torrie, Toward Sustainable Electricity Futures. He too lists dozens of policies which could be implemented to reduce our use of electricity, to, in some cases, moving from electric heat to natural gas heat and installing solar panels on our major apartment buildings in cities to heat them that way. Any movement by the McGuinty government on that front? None.

Let me tell you why. The McGuinty government is so deep in the pockets of private energy companies which do not want to see a reduction in the use of natural gas, which do not want to see a reduction in the use of electricity. So we get these spin announcements that mean essentially nothing, while the real work isn't being done.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. Could I have some order now, please? Thank you.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. There seems to be lots of confusion surrounding the deal reached with the Prime Minister on Saturday, about which you had quite a bit to say yesterday. Can you confirm for us today exactly how much of the agreement is new money that you negotiated for Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** It's a \$5.7-billion agreement; \$4.7 billion is new money. We can devote a lot of time trying to take credit, whether it was Mr. Layton's accomplishment, the Prime Minister's accomplishment, Mr. Goodale's accomplishment or my accomplishment, but I think the single most important thing here is that new Canadians in the province of Ontario win as a result of this arrangement and unemployed workers in Ontario win as a result of this, and we're proud to have brought that success to those Ontarians.

**Mr. Tory:** Premier, you made reference to real progress yesterday, today and the past three days. We still don't really know, though, how much real progress you've made. The federal finance minister says now that Ontario would have received two thirds of this money anyway and that the other one third won't even flow for another two years. Do you therefore agree that the total new money for the next two years is in fact \$510 million?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The leader of the official opposition is just not prepared to find some joy in the accomplishments of Ontario immigrants and Ontario workers. Just to be very clear, there had been an unfairness in place for the past 15 years when it came to the amount of money we received in Ontario for our new Canadians. As a result of this new arrangement, funding has gone from

\$819 per new Canadian to \$3,400 over the course of five years.

As well, with respect to our unemployed workers, we have brought the level of funding up to the national average. Again, that is good news for Ontario workers. The leader of the official opposition may want to try to get into some debate as to who might lay claim to this. I think the real winners in this are Ontario's new Canadians and our workers.

**Mr. Tory:** I say to the Premier, I take great joy, as you do, in finding help for students and for immigrants and so on, and I agree with you on the unfairness, but the real unfairness here, and what we're getting at, is simply to get you to be straight on the details of this agreement, to be straight on exactly what's new and what isn't.

You said earlier today that you were not interested in spinning your so-called deal into a political win for your government, but that didn't stop you yesterday and the day before and the day before that from creating the impression that you were driving a Brinks truck back here from Ottawa when in fact your agreement could have fit inside a smart car with a lot of room to spare. How can anybody in Ontario have any faith in what you say? We will keep fighting for Ontario's cause with you, but we need the straight goods from you on this deal. Will you give us those?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The leader of the official opposition just won't take yes for an answer. This is good news for our new Canadians. It is good news for our workers. It is good news for our students. It is good news for our businesses. It is good news for our health and the quality of our air. This is good news for the province of Ontario. I'm glad we had the people of Ontario on side when I had my meeting with the Prime Minister, and it would be just a bit better if I could get some more support from the leader of the official opposition, as we put our case to the federal government, to stand up for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question.

**Mr. Tory:** The Premier knows full well that I've extended my support throughout this process and I will continue to do so, but that is not the issue on which I'm questioning him today.

Premier, your explanatory—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Could I get some order for the second question placed by the leader of the official opposition, please?

**Mr. Tory:** I will continue to be supportive of the Premier's efforts in this regard, but you do owe this House, I think, some answers. Your explanatory/damage-control sheet handed out this morning lumps post-secondary funding, housing, infrastructure, corporate tax and environment money all together in each of the years of the deal—the five years. Can you tell us in each of the first two years how much new money this deal, your deal with the Prime Minister, produces for post-secondary education?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** We've handed out some detailed background information. If the leader of the

official opposition would like some more, we are more than prepared to provide a technical briefing. But I can say this, once again: Notwithstanding the leader of the official opposition's naysaying on this score, I have always said we should not enlarge this beyond what it actually represents, but neither should we minimize it. We have been able to accomplish something on the immigration file that other governments have sought to achieve over the past 15 years. We enjoyed some considerable success there on behalf of our new Canadians. When it comes to our workers, past governments for the previous 10 years have been unable to find success on that file either. We've been able to secure a new arrangement that ensures our workers will receive funding that's in keeping with the national average.

Why can we not celebrate that modest achievement and keep working together to press the federal government to give us more fairness on other issues?

**Mr. Tory:** I'm just trying to find out from the Premier what the exact scope of the accomplishment is so that we can celebrate it. You don't want to answer the questions. Yesterday, you actually did answer a question. In reply to a question about whether the \$1.55 billion you announced Saturday night was new money or not, you said, "Yes, to be very direct, what we have done is not new money. I did not negotiate that new money."

Today you have issued the sheet you referred to a moment ago—this sheet here—which does in fact suggest that some of it is money you tried to take credit of, that some of it's new and some of it's not. Since there is some confusion about all this, can you tell me if you and the Prime Minister signed a written agreement after your meeting? If so, when will you make that written agreement public?

1420

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Again, we had a good and constructive meeting. We didn't agree on everything, obviously, but we were able to agree on some things that have remained outstanding issues, as I said, for up to the past 15 years. There is more work to be done. We have yet to finalize, in writing, an agreement; we are working feverishly on that. I'm looking forward to my meeting with Mr. Harper as well to secure the same kind of support for the people of Ontario.

I'm proud that we've been able to proceed on this particular issue in a non-partisan way. We've had a good agreement now with the Prime Minister. We will seek—and I will gladly use the support of my friend opposite—to secure the very same arrangement, at a minimum, with Mr. Harper. If Mr. Layton would like to meet with me in this regard, we would be pleased to do so. We will do whatever it takes to stand up for the people of Ontario and ensure that they are treated with fairness.

**Mr. Tory:** When you were able to have a press conference—in fact, several press conferences—when you were able to issue quite a detailed explanatory memo today, although it does lump a lot of things together, I think it is not unreasonable to expect that you would have been able to produce a written agreement signed by



yourself and by the Prime Minister so that we could all see two things: First of all, are things what they appear to be and what you're making them appear to be? Second, just exactly what is the breakdown, for example, about the money, as between housing, infrastructure and so on?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm just trying to be helpful.

**The Speaker:** You're not being helpful, Minister. You're not being helpful one bit. In fact, the disruption has caused much more—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. There's some disorder in Parliament, and I'd like more respect to be given to the member as he asks the question. I'm getting a lot of disruption from this side. Thank you for trying to help me, but I'm quite capable of carrying on the duties of the Speaker when I can hear who the question is coming to and who will be responding. I would rather have much less disruption in order that we can proceed.

Could the Leader of the Opposition ask his question.

**Mr. Tory:** Can you confirm, then, Premier, that there's not a single piece of paper, not a single memorandum, initialled or signed by you and the Prime Minister? If that's so, can you confirm that? Second, tell us when you'll be having an agreement that you will make available to the public so we can all see this deal for ourselves and exactly what was achieved and what wasn't.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It is more than just a little rich. For the last eight to eight and a half years, that government failed to advance this file—both of these files in particular, the immigration file and the labour agreement—one iota. Now the leader of the official opposition seeks to make sure that we put some final gloss on this particular agreement. He reminds me somewhat of the guy who, in the case of a particular fight, offers to hold my coat.

I can tell you, we worked long and hard on behalf of the people of Ontario to secure this arrangement. We will do everything we can not to let this slip out from between our fingers. But it is just a little bit rich that we've been able to accomplish more in nine hours than they could in nine years and that now the leader of the official opposition stands up and pretends to dot every i and cross every t. We will continue on the path that we've pursued already. We will continue to stand up for the people of Ontario and get them the fairness they—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I'm quite capable of handling the matter, thank you very much.

New question; the leader of the third party.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** For the Premier: Yesterday, you boasted about a \$5.75-billion deal with the Prime Minister. Then we heard from the federal Liberal finance minister, Mr. Goodale. He says that you got \$300 million of new money—a little bit of a difference, Premier.

What is really disturbing about this is that after going to Ottawa and only getting \$300 million of new money, you came here and tried to claim credit for over \$5 billion. Premier, now that you have exaggerated the truth once again, should anyone believe what's in your budget tomorrow?

**The Speaker:** I heard some unparliamentary language there being expounded.

**Mr. Hampton:** If there's something unparliamentary, I withdraw it.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I will rule on what is parliamentary or not. I would ask the leader of the third party to withdraw his comment.

**Mr. Hampton:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** The question was to the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** There was a reference there to the budget, and I'm glad to speak to that in the limited ways that I can, obviously, the day before it's going to be presented in this very chamber.

Our budget will speak to the priorities held and shared by the people of Ontario. It will emphasize their desire to build a still stronger system of public education, grounded in good public schools. As well, we will speak to, through our budget, a stronger health care system. We will as well, through our budget, do more to build a stronger, more sustainable, more robust, more vigorous economy. Those are the very priorities held by the people of Ontario, and our budget will speak to those tomorrow.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, I want to speak to the facts as known by Mr. Goodale, the Liberal federal finance minister. He says that a third of the money that you tried to take credit for yesterday was already committed in the original federal budget of February. He says that a further third of the money that you tried to take credit for yesterday was negotiated by NDP leader Jack Layton. He says he might give you credit for the remaining third, but that money isn't going to come to Ontario until 2007.

Premier, having grossly exaggerated your talk with the Prime Minister in Ottawa on the weekend, why should anyone believe the McGuinty budget tomorrow?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Yes, from time to time we will have a disagreement with the federal government. The fact that they happen to enjoy the same political stripe as do we is not going to get in the way, ever, of our government doing whatever we feel is in the interests of the people of Ontario. So, yes, I have a disagreement with the federal finance minister's interpretation of our arrangement. That is fine. That is not something that is going to dissuade us, ever. We will continue to advance the cause of fairness on behalf of the people of Ontario regardless of the political stripe that happens to enjoy the privilege of governing through Parliament Hill.

**Mr. Hampton:** I would say that a disagreement with the federal finance minister to the tune of \$4 billion a year is quite a disagreement, but it underlines the Premier's credibility gap.

Last year, you promised you wouldn't raise taxes. Then you imposed an unfair and regressive health tax

that hits modest- and middle-income families the hardest. Then you tried a \$3.9-billion Enron-style accounting trick until the provincial Auditor General blew the whistle on you. Now you come back from Ottawa and try to claim credit for \$5.7 billion when the finance minister says it's \$300 million; that's all you got for now.

Premier, I say again, given your record of exaggeration, given your own credibility gap, why should anyone believe the McGuinty budget tomorrow?

1430

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'm not sure what more I can add. I know that there is a lot of excitement to be found in political clashes and who can claim the most credit for what, but I really think this is all about what it is that we have done for two particular groups of Ontarians. I think we have a good new arrangement now for our new Canadians. Yes, this is over the course of five years, but we have been waiting 15 years to get this done. When we can quadruple the level of federal funding for our immigrants in Ontario, I think that is good news. When we can bring the federal funding level up to the national average for our unemployed workers to provide them with greater training opportunities, I think that is good news. No, we have not gone as far as we would like to go, but we are pleased and frankly proud of those modest accomplishments that we have achieved on behalf of those groups of Ontarians.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** A new question to the Premier. We thought we had a good-news story for the lowest-income children in this province with the national child benefit supplement, but your government claws that money back from the poorest children in this province. That's their good-news story.

I want to again ask you about your budget, because we've found out now that you have a scheme to invite private, profit-driven corporations into Ontario's schools, hospitals, and all sorts of other public buildings and public assets. We already have examples of this: P3 hospitals in Ottawa and Brampton. Private corporations stand to make a lot of money out of the health budget.

Premier, I want to ask you, in the context of your budget, do you still claim that those P3 hospitals in Ottawa and Brampton are in fact public hospitals?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Yes, I do. I think it's important, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this issue. It is an important issue and I think it's really important that we strip away the ideology that can cloud our minds. Let me tell you just a little bit about the nature of the challenge before all of us. Obviously, the leader of the NDP has a different approach to this. I understand that, but I disagree with him.

The average age of our hospitals in Ontario is 43 years. We have many schools that have been built in the 1920s. We have water pipes in the ground, in Toronto and Ottawa in particular, that are over 100 years old. We

still have water pipes in Ontario that are made of wood. Everybody knows about our congestion on our highways; it is a drag on the economy here in the GTA to the tune of \$2 billion. We have hold-ups at our borders; congestion there is costing us \$5 billion.

The issue then becomes, what is the best way for us to address that huge infrastructure deficit? We think that we need an alternate way. We think it's time for us to look at new ways to accomplish things that serve the public interest, and I will be delighted to speak to those more fulsomely in the supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Premier, this is what you said a few months before the election: "Public ownership is less costly than the private option. It's the best deal for taxpayers." That's what you told your hometown newspaper in Ottawa before the election. Now, Dalton McGuinty is prepared to invite private, profit-driven corporations into our schools, our hospitals, our water systems, our roads, our transit systems, when you yourself say that it will cost the public more money.

Premier, when you yourself say it's going to cost the taxpayers, the public of Ontario, more money, what could possibly be the justification for this? "Pay more," Dalton McGuinty said. How do you justify it now?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I'm sure that the leader of the NDP will want to be clear about this. I know that in every opportunity he has, he will also make it clear that our minister responsible for public infrastructure renewal has specifically stated that hospitals, schools and water systems will remain publicly owned, publicly operated and publicly controlled. I'm sure he will want to make that clear.

What I would recommend to the leader of the NDP and to all Ontarians is to go to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal's Web site and take a look at a very thoughtful, intelligent speech that he delivered yesterday. If it's not on the Web site—and I'm sure that by the end of this question period it will be—it will be available to the people of Ontario. It lays out, in particular, five very stringent guidelines that will serve to guide us as we explore alternate public financing.

**Mr. Hampton:** I don't think Ontarians want your most recent idiosyncratic interpretation of your broken promises. Before the election, you called P3 hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa a bad deal, and after the election, you tried to call them public hospitals.

Here's what the Toronto Star says: "In opposition, the Liberals attacked the Tories for plans to have private interests finance and build hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa. But a month after taking power, the Liberals essentially signed on...."

This is what the Kitchener-Waterloo Record says: "You'd need a microscope to tell the difference between the deal cut by the Tories and the one agreed to by the Liberals for these hospitals after the election."

Premier, we can already see how you change your definition of what's a public hospital, what's a public school, what's a public asset, but I'm asking you again—before the election, you said these were bad deals; you



said taxpayers would end up paying more, a lot more. How easily did you change your opinion after the election?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** I can tell you on behalf of the communities of Ottawa and Brampton that they are delighted to be receiving their new hospitals, serving important public purposes and meeting the health care needs in their communities.

The leader of the NDP, if he had his way, as I understand it, would shut those hospitals down and deprive those communities of that important health care service. That may be his approach, but that is not our approach.

As Minister Caplan said in his speech, we will be guided by five important principles when it comes to these projects: The public interest will be paramount; value for money must be demonstrable; appropriate public ownership and control will be maintained; accountability will also be paramount; and the process will be fair, transparent and efficient. We will move ahead, and we will, at all times, protect the public interest.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question. The member from Whitby–Ajax.

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** A question for the Premier: I congratulate you on your conversion to public-private partnerships, on your recognition of the need to have the private sector and pension funds investing in infrastructure. There was something peculiar your minister said yesterday, though. He said, “Hospitals, schools and water absolutely will be publicly owned,” but a private company will just hold the mortgages.

Premier, can you help us? You’re a lawyer and you understand this. Can you help us on this new Liberal invention, the McGuinty mortgage? How does this work?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The maker of the Caplan mortgage will speak to that.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** I’m delighted to have a chance to illuminate for my colleague from Whitby–Ajax how we’re going to be moving forward. I would use an example of the Durham courthouse, a project in Durham that this member tried to move forward for eight and a half years. It did not move from concept to actual construction. We are out right now on an RFP, where we’re asking the private sector for construction of a new consolidated courthouse in Durham. The private sector will work to finance it. Over the course of the lifetime of that building, we will pay a fee to the consortium to be able to occupy those premises, to be able to have justice dispensed in a consolidated courthouse. I know that the member from Whitby–Ajax would want to congratulate our government for moving this project ahead, where he and his government absolutely were not able to do that.

**Mr. Flaherty:** Minister, let me help you. When you mortgage a property, you transfer the legal ownership of the property. That’s what you do. So when you say, “I’m just going to mortgage the property,” you’re transferring the legal ownership from the province of Ontario to the mortgagee. You ought to think about that. Why not just come up and say, “Listen, we finally recognize, as Prime

Minister Blair’s government recognized in the United Kingdom, that this is a Conservative idea”? But it has been proven. It works in Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom and various US states. I congratulate you on finally coming to the realization that it works. But you wasted \$30 million of taxpayers’ money by dithering on the Brampton hospital.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Flaherty:** Well, you had your own Premier saying, “But let me be very clear ... we don’t support the P3 funding model.” Why don’t you just come clean and recognize that you’ve finally seen the light?

1440

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I’m disappointed, of course, that the member would not want to recognize that we have set down a principle-based approach to be able to get the kind of investment that we need. I think this is part of the contrast between the former government and our government. It’s why I’m very confident, through the principles, public interest being paramount, that we have appropriate public control and ownership, that we have appropriate and responsible accountability measures, that we be able to demonstrate value for money and, of course, that all processes are fair, transparent and efficient.

I would contrast the record of our government and the previous government, who took consumers for a ride on Highway 407 with the fire sale of an asset, a loss of control. Selling out the people of Ontario is not the way of the McGuinty government; we will move in a principle-based way. That’s what taxpayers would expect from us, and that’s exactly what we’re going to deliver.

## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** Wow. A principled Liberal approach—what a step. I’ve got to say, that’s an oxymoron.

More important, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. He would know that across this province last Friday we had bus drivers driving in front of constituency offices protesting what’s been happening in busing over the last number of years. They have seen their insurance costs go through the roof, their fuel costs go through the roof, repair and maintenance go through the roof, and the purchase price of new buses has gone up as well. What we do know is that, for about the last 10 years, we have seen the funding for school buses go down by about \$3 million in that time that prices have been going up.

My question is a very simple one for you. On behalf of school bus drivers and operators across this province, like Ron Malette of Tisdale buses in Timmins, will you adjust the funding formula to allow them to keep pace with inflation at the very least?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** It does the heart good to see the NDP member up arguing on behalf of the private bus operators. They deserve some attention, I think, from this House, and I’m glad he is here on their behalf.

We have met with the bus operators. We have talked to them about their conditions. One of them, a large Laidlaw concern, has 67% of the business in the province, and I'm sure they have the sympathy of the member opposite as well. They have ours. We are interested in them working well with the school boards.

We increased school bus funding by 5% last year—the first government to get ahead of inflation in terms of doing that. The last government forgot to get a transportation funding formula, and we've worked hard with the sector to come up with one. We have an agenda with the bus operators of Ontario, but at our last meeting we asked them six or eight pointed questions, which we're still waiting for replies to.

**Mr. Bisson:** We know you have an agenda with school bus operators, and that is to keep the prices down. The number that you flaunt here in the Legislature today is not at all what they are feeling at the actual operational level. We know, for example, that your funding formula coming this fall is actually going to see about half the school boards in this province losing even more money.

I go back and ask you again. There is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with. A lot of these independent mom-and-pop operators across Ontario, in my riding as in yours, are in a situation where they can't afford to operate. The price they're getting to operate their school buses doesn't keep up with all the inflationary costs of running their business.

They met with you 15 months ago. You said you were going to do something, and now, 15 months later, they're waiting. Nothing has happened. My question to you is, will we see something in the budget tomorrow to address the shortfall for school bus operators?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** I think there's trouble with numbers on the other side. We met three months ago with the bus owners. We had a very constructive meeting and in fact, at that meeting, identified a number of the cost pressures. We asked them for information. We have gotten some of that from some of the bus operators.

Our main concern is that kids get transportation; 40% of school kids in Ontario get transported by public busing and publicly paid-for busing. We're going to make sure that is done safely and effectively, and we are going to make sure that the cost base for the boards for those students is covered. We believe that's what the bus operators are looking for as well.

As others have said, right here in this House you'll hear about the budget. You'll hear about good things for education. I'm sure transportation is one of those good things.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, over the weekend, our Premier and the Prime Minister had, as we all know now, a very successful

meeting. Our Premier went to Ottawa to stand up for Ontario, and that's exactly what he did.

I'm very proud to stand here today and say that the Premier and the Prime Minister resolved two major issues that have been unfair for a long time in Ontario: immigration and training. The agreement they arrived at covers more than \$5.75 billion over five years. This is obviously an important start toward narrowing the \$23-billion gap.

I know that, as in my riding—and many other ridings have many newcomers to Canada—the news of this agreement will be very, very well received. What does this agreement deliver, though, in terms of immigration funding specifically?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I am very proud that our Premier succeeded in making real progress for Ontarians over the weekend. As a government, we have accomplished what previous governments could not do in 15 years: We finally got fairness for immigrants in Ontario.

Funding for immigrant support services will double in the next year and quadruple, from \$819 to \$3,400 per immigrant, over the next five years. These monies will go directly to the agencies that provide the services for new Canadians.

As the Premier has said, this is about more than just government and it's about more than being the Premier or the Prime Minister; it's about a strong Ontario for a strong Canada.

We thank both the Premier and the Prime Minister. We finally have an immigration agreement in Ontario—a strong, fair agreement for our new Canadians.

**Mr. Patten:** Minister, it's good to hear those words. I understand that the deal our Premier was able to secure with the Prime Minister also included reference to the labour market development agreement which we, in Ontario, have been looking forward to completing for many, many years.

I know that constituents in my riding have complained about the two rounds of training programs; one at the federal level, others at the provincial level—"Which one is better?", "Are they the same?" etc. Like all Ontario constituents, in my riding they deserve seamless training. They have to develop the most up-to-date skills in order to compete in today's ever-changing knowledge society. So I ask you, what will a labour market development agreement really mean for many new Canadians in Ontario?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** I want to thank my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre for this very important question. I also want to thank the Premier for bringing to a head an issue that has been outstanding for 10 years. Ontario has been the only province without a labour market development agreement, and I'd like to share with



the House today what that means to the people of Ontario.

For a start, it might surprise you to know that with the previous situation, 70% of unemployed Ontarians did not even qualify for services provided by the federal government that are employment-insurance-based.

This agreement is not just about the additional \$1 billion that will come to the people of Ontario over the next five years, but also about improved client service, a reduction of duplication in services provided, and success through additional training and employment services.

This is an absolutely wonderful deal for the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question. The member for Erie-Lincoln.

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** Back to the Premier. Premier, I'm following up on a question from the leader of the official opposition that I believe you neglected to answer. Is it true that you walked away from your meeting with the Prime Minister without a single signed document, a memorandum of understanding or other written record to which you had agreed?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Again, we have a question from a member of a former government which, for eight and a half years, sat on its hands. It luxuriated in rhetoric. What we have obtained for the people of Ontario are results: genuine, measurable results. This is good news for our new Canadians. It is good news for our unemployed workers. It helps move the yardstick forward. There is more work to be done, and we look forward to doing that on behalf of the people of Ontario.

1450

**Mr. Hudak:** Premier, I'm rather incredulous that you haven't answered this question after three or four tries. I'm beginning to think that if there's any written document, it's on the back of a napkin beneath somebody's drink. Surely, Premier, with this important meeting you must have documented what the deal means and over how much time the deal will be. There seems to be an awful lot of confusion, where you're crowing about your deal but the finance minister says, "Ontario Deal Mostly Recycled" in the *Toronto Star*, and the *National Post* reports, "Ottawa Dollars for Ontario Same Ones Promised NDP." Premier, please tell me it's not true. Please tell me you're not making this up as you go along. Will you release the MOU, whatever signed document you have, or just come forward and say you didn't sign anything?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** For the benefit of the member, just so he knows how these things work, after there are negotiations, there is an agreed statement in the form of a joint communiqué, and we do this whether it's a Council of the Federation meeting, a first ministers' meeting or a bilateral meeting between the Prime Minister and the Premier. We did that. What we need to do now, and what we're in fact doing as we speak, is to refine the communiqué and put it into writing so that we can have a signed document. That's the way these things work. I say to the member opposite, as the member of a government

that sat on its hands for a long and painful eight and a half years, we were able to accomplish more in nine hours than they did in their nine years, and we're proud of what we were able to bring home for our new Canadians and our unemployed workers.

## WATER QUALITY

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to the Minister of the Environment. The Advisory Council on Drinking Water Quality and Testing Standards submitted its report to you on February 8, over three months ago. The council recommended a new regulation to protect water quality without causing a huge financial burden to small businesses trying to comply. Will you implement the council's recommendations, especially the new regulation, and when will you do that?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment):** I'm very happy to say that I want to congratulate the good work the advisory council on drinking water quality did. They consulted extensively across the province, they went to 12 communities and they brought some very fine recommendations that our ministry is paying very close attention to. One component of their recommendations would suggest that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care would have a role to play in assisting communities and businesses to determine whether or not their drinking water is safe, and so my ministry is working very closely with Health and Long-Term Care to devise a solid plan going forward on how we can help businesses and communities across Ontario improve this flawed regulation.

**Ms. Martel:** The delay in the government response is causing great uncertainty among business owners: those who own trailer parks, campgrounds, bed-and-breakfasts, etc. For example, Tim and Sue Shannon own a restaurant and a golf course in Alban, in the south part of Nickel Belt. At this point, if there is no change, they will pay between \$15,000 and \$20,000 for a new water system. They will need chlorination. Beginning June 1, they will pay \$185 every month for weekly water testing. Every Monday morning they will drive two and a half hours round trip to the nearest private lab to drop off their water samples.

They want to protect their drinking water, but they need to know what the rules of the game are. They need to know what they will be required to do and how much it's going to cost. I ask you again, when will you be bringing forward a new regulation so that Tim and Sue Shannon and so many operators can know what they are dealing with?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** This ministry and this government are very aware of the challenges this regulation has presented. That is why we are doing the work we are doing. But we also know that when you do not take the time to consult and to make sure you get it right the first time—we have a regulation 170. We have something that does not work well in the communities. I have committed to ensure that we bring back a regulation that will meet

the needs and, at the same time, ensure that water is protected and that water provided within these communities is safe to drink.

We are working with the Ministry of Health. I've indicated to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that we will come forward with this as soon as possible. But what I am also committed to is ensuring that when the changes are made to this regulation, they will be workable for the people in the communities who need them to ensure that their water is safe.

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. David Oraziatti (Sault Ste. Marie):** My question is to the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet. Minister, our government was elected to help rebuild public services, and I am proud of the work we are doing in the key areas of health care and education.

Unlike the NDP, who ripped up the collective agreements of thousands of public service workers, and unlike the Conservatives, who cut the heart out of public services and caused years of labour unrest, I know we are working hard to ensure that Ontario public service employees have fair agreements. I've met with numerous groups representing government employees, including local bargaining unit presidents from the Ontario Public Service Employees Union in Sault Ste. Marie, who represent 708 members.

My understanding is that earlier today OPSEU provided an update on negotiations. Could you provide the House with any further information regarding the status of collective bargaining between our government and OPSEU?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** The public should be aware that we're in negotiations with OPSEU, which is our largest union. Roughly 42,000 of our public servants are with that union.

I just want to say that we, as a government, believe very much in collective bargaining. We are determined to reach a fair and equitable agreement with OPSEU that's fair to our employees and, I might say, fair to the public.

I think the member from Sault Ste. Marie is aware of this, but the public may not be: Since we were elected, we've delivered on our commitment to public service. There was a concern by the union about outside consultants, and we looked at that. There were 450 outside consultants doing work. We've put those jobs back in the public service for a reason. We saved almost \$20 million that the previous government was wasting.

I want to say to the member for Sault Ste. Marie, we are working very hard with OPSEU to reach a fair and equitable agreement because we believe very much in collective bargaining.

**Mr. Oraziatti:** Minister, it's good to see that the parties are working together toward a new collective agreement.

As you know, OPSEU is not our only partner. AMAPCEO, the Association of Management, Adminis-

trative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario, is one of the largest public service unions, representing over 7,000 employees in a variety of jobs, including policy, finance, project and program management, and nursing supervisors. The hard-working AMAPCEO employees make an important contribution to public services of Ontario. What is the status of government negotiations with AMAPCEO?

**Hon. Mr. Phillips:** Again for the public's information, I think 7,200 of our employees are in this union, AMAPCEO, and, as you say, it's many of the people who are involved in our management, administration and professional services.

We have been involved in collective bargaining with them. I'm very happy to let the House know that both sides have ratified an agreement that is, I believe, fair to our employees and fair to the taxpayers. I think 96% voted in favour of it. The vote concluded last Friday. It is a fair salary, and it addressed two or three of the issues that concerned the union: some overtime provisions and some job classifications.

The point I'd make to the member from Sault Ste. Marie and members of the House is that we believe in collective bargaining. We think we have demonstrated with this agreement with our AMAPCEO union a fair settlement for them and a fair settlement for the public. It's my hope that we can do the same thing with OPSEU.

### SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, almost two years ago your ministry commissioned Cathexis Consulting to review specific services for disabled persons in our province. You received that report last year. What have you done with this report?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question. I am not certain if we're speaking about the same report, but I'm assuming you're talking about a report on intervenor services. This is a report that we actually received this year. In fact, it's very open to the public. We posted it on the Web site in the first quarter of this year. Now we are looking to see how we're going to implement it.

If the MPP across the way read through the report that was on the Web site, he would see that the solution is a much more complicated ordeal than it would appear. It's going to take a significant review of how we do assessments for what people truly need in services, so that we can finally apply services in the area for people who need intervenor services in a fair and equitable manner.

1500

**Mr. Jackson:** Minister, this issue has been identified by both the Human Rights Commission and your own ministry's staff through the requirements of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I've raised this issue with you on a couple of occasions; in particular, on behalf of my constituent Barbara Davis, who receives only two and a



half hours of intervener supports per week. There is a whole host of—in fact, there are several thousand—Ontarians who receive very little, if any at all, access to deaf-blind intervener services. Minister, when will you be advising this House that you have a plan in place, that you are going to be able to honour the commitment that was made through the Human Rights Code that all deaf-blind residents of Ontario will receive equal treatment and equal access from the government of Ontario?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I think the member opposite understands that there is an issue of inequity in terms of how people receive services, people who have a serious need for services. Back in 1992 the government of that day made some serious changes that, in my view, created a series of inequities that, quite frankly, continued right through the last government. In fact, members of the cabinet, that member included, who has the nerve today to stand and ask a question about equity and service delivery—to know that he could stand in the House today after he sat at the cabinet table, knowing that this inequity was going on all those years, and didn't do a darn thing about changing the assessment mechanisms, about making sure that services were being applied in a very fair manner so it's not a matter of who yells the loudest gets the services, because I find that kind of system impossible.

We won't have that kind of system. We are going right back to the basics in our review. The most significant part of that was doing that complete review so we know what direction we need to go in. I will be working with those organizations to see that it is a fair system.

#### TRANSIT SERVICES

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday your government signed a memorandum to fund the Ottawa light rail transit project. Hundreds of laid-off workers at the Bombardier transit rail car factory in Thunder Bay hoped that this would be good news for them, that they would be able to go back to work. But then they received a letter from your government, the McGuinty government, that says you are prepared to allow these rail transit cars to be built outside Ontario, not in Thunder Bay. Premier, why should hundreds of workers at the Bombardier rail transit factory in Thunder Bay remain on layoff while your government spends \$100 million to purchase rail transit cars made outside Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** We are moving ahead with a very aggressive plan on the transit side. As far as the employees from Bombardier are concerned, we are actually embarking, with the city of Ottawa, on a very fair and equitable process. This process will be very transparent. The people from Bombardier and the Bombardier company will be eligible for bidding on this, along with other companies. We look forward to that process unfolding as we move ahead with acquiring the trains for the Ottawa area.

**Mr. Hampton:** The minister talks about a fair and transparent process. I don't see anything very fair here for workers in Thunder Bay, where 500 or 600 of them are already on layoff. You're going to take \$100 million of taxpayers' money, despite the fact there is an agreement from 1992 that says that the province will use its best efforts to ensure these kinds of rail transit vehicles will be built in Thunder Bay. The TTC purchases rail cars from this factory; they purchase streetcars. GO Transit purchases cars from this factory.

I ask again: Given that they do good work, given that they've done good work for GO Transit, for the TTC, why is the McGuinty government prepared to spend \$100 million on rail transit cars built outside of Ontario while these Thunder Bay workers, hundreds of them, sit on layoff?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I'm not sure why the leader of the third party doesn't have faith that Bombardier can bid in an open and fair process. From my point of view, it's an open and competitive process. I'm sure the city of Ottawa will engage in a very fair process, and Bombardier, along with other companies, will be able to bid on that.

I also want to point out to you that we have sought two legal opinions on the 1992 agreement. That was only valid for five years. I don't know where you get the illusion that this agreement is still valid.

Having said that, I think Bombardier is a great company, and they can bid in an open and fair process.

#### EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I'd like to ask you about the recent amendments you made for the education of children of our recent immigrants.

This government embraces the principle of equity and accessible education for all. It's called public education. Last week, you rose in the House to introduce amendments to the Education Act that actually seek to address this particular issue about children of recent immigrants. You spoke about their rights to an education, and we believe in those rights, because they will build the future of Ontario with the same bricks and mortar of equity and opportunity. As a Liberal, for all of us, these are our principles, and I am proud that you are weaving these through.

Minister, could you please explain these new exemptions and can you explain what effect this has for the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** There is, I think, a good basis for everyone in this House to support the bill brought in last week to amend the Education Act. It is simply not acceptable to anyone in this House that there should be children whose futures are interrupted by some kind of administrative limbo in which they find themselves; children whose parents have applied to Citizenship and Immigration Canada for per-

manent resident status and plan to stay in this country; or, alternatively, children whose parents have been received here to study at publicly funded Ontario universities or colleges. It doesn't make sense that we wouldn't provide the foresight to ensure that they could be at school while their status is being worked out. It is something we think is long overdue.

In fact, we know that school boards that are not necessarily anticipating the outcome of this but are so encouraged are already starting to respond positively to these families, hoping this House does indeed provide these provisions in law: that all students should be where they belong—in school, learning.

**Mrs. Cansfield:** Thank you, Minister. I know the people of Ontario are pleased with how we're addressing this issue.

I know that for many years, the Conservatives had an opportunity to address this issue, but chose not to. As a matter of fact, when you rose in the House last week, the member from Whitby-Ajax actually said that to educate the children of recent immigrants was a burden to the people of Ontario. Educating a child is a burden? I don't think so. Educating children is exactly what our future would be. The real cost is leaving these children in the dark and leaving them behind, but that's in fact what the Tories did for a lot of years: They chose to put their money into private education instead of public education.

Minister, can you tell me what these new announcements will mean to the families of recent immigrants to Ontario?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** We see that fixing this long-standing anomaly is sending a signal that Ontario is still a place where people want to be. I think this province is defined by successive waves of immigrants coming here, hoping to better themselves and certainly their children, and the way they do that is through access to education. I think there was a loss of emphasis on that in the government that preceded us.

This is a small signal but an important and responsible one that that idea continues to live here in Ontario. We are rebuilding education, not just for the few, not just for those who can afford extra education on their own, but for everyone, including those who might find themselves, at least temporarily, in the most disadvantaged and vulnerable position. They belong in schools, and, more than that, they will flourish there because of the commitment of this government and this Premier.

1510

## EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** To the Minister of Education: How do you explain the contradiction between your pronouncements of peace and stability in the classroom and the reality that work-to-rule is disrupting classrooms right across this province, particularly in light of David Reid's comments about the state of classrooms in the city of Toronto?

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I can only say to the member opposite that we have negotiations taking place in this province, negotiations that have come to a fruitful conclusion already in a number of jurisdictions. We have ratified agreements and we have agreements that are going to be put for ratification. It is simply, I think, an improvement on what the state was before but, most important, it is the way to get the job done.

Running education is not about making pronouncements in this House; it's about what is actually happening out there where children are getting their schooling. That is taking place right now. We are pleased with the conduct in general of the negotiations that are taking place and we're happy that people are taking up the spirit of a new era in education where everyone tries to leave the conflict of the past behind and find an answer that works for education and also for the important people who make education happen.

**Mr. Klees:** After some \$2.68 billion that you've guaranteed for teachers' settlements, will you also guarantee a similar framework for support workers, for secretaries, for janitors? Will you guarantee that there will be no disruption of classes between now and the end of the school year?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** It's interesting. I guess I have to welcome, if this is his outlook, that he is now advocating for the very people they laid off in droves when they were in government, the people they did not protect in the funding formula. The reason why we have to put \$3 billion toward fixing our schools is because there weren't enough janitors; there wasn't enough cleaning being done in our publicly funded spaces. The member opposite was part of a government that voted to cut money, to take it away from children and from the people who provided services to children.

We have extended the same kind of possibilities for four-year agreements to our support staff. We have also extended an invitation to them to talk to us about the kind of provincial issues—safety is an issue for some of our education systems. There is training that needs to be provided because we've expanded special education services. Those are things that they have to talk about. We're doing things in small schools to ensure that secretaries are in place. We invite the member to continue to support the idea of publicly funded education and leave the bad habits of the last government and the emphasis on private schools behind him where they belong: in the past.

## DISCRIMINATION

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Premier. Last week, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation published a report on nurses which found, "The vast majority of racialized nurses ... reported that they felt 'put down, insulted or degraded because of race, colour or ethnicity.'" When they complained there was no accountability in hospitals to deal with the complaints,



they were targeted as problem nurses and they felt they were losing their jobs because they had been targeted.

The report says that the health care sector should establish measures to monitor the working conditions of racialized nurses to put an end to discrimination. It also recommends that the Ontario Human Rights Commission investigate systemic discrimination against racialized nurses and ensure that the race policy that is due to come forward includes fines for employers who resist anti-racism procedures. Premier, can you tell this House if your government will implement the recommendations in the report?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** Let me say on behalf of the Minister of Health that we are grateful to receive these recommendations. I know that he will want to take them into consideration. I know that I speak for every single member of this Legislature when I say that we stand against discrimination of any kind, whether it's against our nurses or any other Ontarian.

I thank the member opposite for bringing this matter to my attention. I will ensure that the Minister of Health is made aware of her question. He may then have an opportunity to speak with her more specifically and more precisely about what he intends to do with those recommendations.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** In the west members' gallery we have with us former member Larry O'Connor from Durham-York, from the 35th Parliament. Let's welcome him.

#### PETITIONS

##### FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

**Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada's first Nobel Prize recipient; and

"Whereas this great Canadian's original homestead located in the town of New Tecumseth"—Alliston—"is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

"Whereas the town of New Tecumseth, under the leadership of Mayor Mike MacEachern and former Mayor Larry Keogh, has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Culture and the Liberal government step in to ensure that the Banting homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come."

I agree, and I have signed that petition.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I have a petition from many individuals wanting the Minister of Education to do something about the following:

"Whereas during the 2003 election campaign Dalton McGuinty promised to establish a standing committee on education to ensure transparency in education funding; and

"Whereas such a committee has not been established; and

"Whereas Ontario's education system is not properly funded and there is no transparency in funding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately establish a standing committee on education to hold public hearings every year on the effectiveness of education funding."

I support this petition.

#### DISABILITY BENEFITS

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I'm pleased to submit this petition on behalf of CAW Local 199, Bruce Allen, vice-president.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board adds Canada pension plan disability benefits to an injured worker's deemed earnings to determine the loss of earnings or future earnings lost; and

"Whereas deducting Canada pension disability benefits from loss of earnings or future earnings loss benefits systematically undercompensates injured workers; and

"Whereas the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board bases long-term compensation on deemed earnings that an injured worker is not actually receiving;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act by removing the deeming provisions and providing legislation to base a loss-of-earnings benefit to reflect actual lost earnings; and

"To amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to end the deduction of Canada pension plan disability benefits from future economic loss and loss of earnings benefits retroactively."

I'm pleased to sign this petition.

#### COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Brock township has been declared an underserved area by the Ministry of Health with respect to physician services since 1996;

"Whereas the Ontario government announced the creation of 150 family health teams, just like the community health centre in the spring budget;

"Whereas a CHC in Brock township could provide a range of community-based health and social services provided by a multidisciplinary team including physicians, nurse practitioners, nutritionists, health promotion coordinators, social workers, counsellors and other health professionals needed in our local community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Brock CHC proposal submitted on February 27, 2003, be funded as recommended by the district health council."

I'd like to thank the former member Larry O'Connor and his team for coming down today and helping me present this.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I have a petition from one of my local pharmacists, Ranjan Rupal.

"Whereas we, the undersigned,

"Share the concern of Ontario pharmacists that the government is considering changes to the drug program that could restrict access to some medications or force patients to pay more for their prescriptions, placing seniors, low-income families and many other Ontarians at risk;

"Recognize that these changes could affect the ability of pharmacists to continue to provide quality programs and services, decreasing Ontarians' access to essential health care services; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that pharmacists, as advocates for quality patient care, should have a greater role to play in advising the government when it considers changes that will affect the health of Ontarians,

"We hereby petition the government of Ontario:

"To work with Ontario pharmacists to prevent cutbacks to the drug program; and

"To establish a process that brings pharmacists to the table to provide solutions that will protect patients and strengthen health care for all Ontarians."

1520

#### HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas noxious odours from the Halton Recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

"Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face

threats to their health and well-being, and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

"Whereas for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment, as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton Recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue."

#### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I keep getting petitions around the eyesore of a bridge on St. Clair Avenue West. The petition is addressed to the minister of infrastructure services and the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning to tunnel in an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; and

"Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue-Old Weston Road bridge; and

"Whereas this bridge ... will be ... too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; ... it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both the east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and ... it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

I sign my name to it since I agree with this petition 100%.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas 20% of the adult population, or 1.8 million adults in Ontario, continue to smoke; and

"Whereas hospitality concepts like bars, pubs, taverns, nightclubs, Legions, bingo halls, racetracks and casinos



are businesses with a high percentage of patrons who smoke; and

"Whereas more than 700 businesses in Ontario have invested tens of thousands of dollars each to construct a designated smoking room to comply with municipal bylaws;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Permit properly ventilated and separate designated smoking rooms in hospitality establishments that regulate and control employee and customer exposure to second-hand smoke."

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** A "Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Credit Valley Hospital Capital Improvements:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

The people are Maria Cescato, Aldo Cescato and Nadia Rosa Cescato.

### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** This is one of the Save Huronia Regional Centre petitions. Again, it's up to about 45,000 people who have signed this across the province.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of Huronia Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, open, and to transform them into 'centres of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this and present it to Kaitlin to present to you.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition here from the Strathdee family of Glen Erin Drive in Meadowvale, the Sommerfeld family of Hillside Drive in Streetsville, and the Cambareri family of Dover Crescent in Erin Mills, regarding the Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements campaign. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fundraising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at

Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I wholeheartedly approve of the petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature to it and to ask Trishaala to carry it for me.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton-Victoria-Brock):** "Save the Rideau Regional Centre, Home to People with Developmental Disabilities!"

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close the Rideau Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

"Whereas closing the Rideau Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities;

"Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the Rideau Regional Centre to extend specialized services, support and professional training to many more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep the Rideau Regional Centre open as a home for people with developmental disabilities and to maintain it as a 'centre of excellence' to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live."

This is signed by hundreds of people within my riding.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** On behalf of some of my friends in Mississauga:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients, and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner; to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department; and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I will affix my signature to it, on behalf of my friends in Mississauga.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005

##### LOI DE 2005 SUR L'ACCESSIBILITÉ POUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs Bountrogianni moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act respecting the development, implementation and enforcement of standards relating to accessibility with respect to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings and all other things specified in the Act for persons with disabilities / Projet de loi 118, Loi traitant de l'élaboration, de la mise en oeuvre et de l'application de normes concernant l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées en ce qui concerne les biens, les services, les installations, l'emploi, le logement, les bâtiments et toutes les autres choses qu'elle précise.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 9, 2005, I am now required to put the question.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1532 to 1542.*

**The Speaker:** Would all members please take their seats.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.



## Ayes

Arnett, Ted	Hampton, Howard	O'Toole, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Oraziotti, David
Baird, John R.	Horwath, Andrea	Patten, Richard
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Racco, Mario G.
Broten, Laurel C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Runciman, Robert W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Chudleigh, Ted	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Delaney, Bob	McGuinity, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	Milloy, John	Wong, Tony C.
Flaherty, Jim	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Yakabuski, John
Fonseca, Peter	Munro, Julia	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr. David Lepofsky.

## EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Ms. Wynne, on behalf of Mr. Kennedy, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 194, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 194, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Ms. Wynne?

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West):** I'm going to share my time with the member for Guelph-Wellington, Liz Sandals, and the member for Etobicoke North, Shafiq Qaadri.

I think it's absolutely appropriate that we'd be speaking to Bill 194, which is a bill speaking to accessibility, after we've just voted on Bill 118, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

I rise today to speak to the legislative amendments that would unlock our school doors for children of recent immigrants. What this new legislation would do is, it would waive school fees for these students who, because of administrative issues, are not at this point able to enter our schools without paying fees.

The number this would affect is about 250 students from around the province who are not able to go to

school. Right now, there are another 200 or so students who are already attending the Toronto District School Board because the board has already allowed them to. In total, we're talking about 450 students who would then legally be able to attend school without paying fees in the province.

We are obviously concerned about all children in the province, and education is a huge priority for this government. The policies that we put in place are intended to deal with education issues for all students, but there are some niche education issues that should be addressed, and this is one of them.

Notre gouvernement croit fermement que chaque enfant a le droit d'apprendre. Nous avons la charge d'enlever les barrières qui enferment des enfants dans un vide administratif à cause du statut d'immigration de leurs parents.

This government firmly believes that every child has the right to learn. We have a responsibility to remove barriers that leave our children in administrative limbo because of their parents' immigration status. Thousands of students across Ontario will benefit from many of the government's education initiatives already underway, as I have said. I want to talk about some of the great things that we're doing in Ontario, but from the perspective of these children who have not been able to access our system and why they cannot wait.

## 1550

We have put in place an education foundations program, and a key outcome in that program is that every student is able to read, write, do math and comprehend at a high level by the age of 12. This is the age when students are defining themselves in terms of school success. After this age, acquiring these skills becomes harder.

It's clear that this piece of legislation is absolutely in line with what we're trying to do for students across the province. We need to get children into the school system and into a formal learning situation as soon as possible, whatever their immigration status.

We're committed to making progress on giving every student the possibility of a full range of choices in their academic career, and the earlier they start on that, the better. We're going to be able to measure how we succeed on this. You will know that our goal is that 75% of 12-year-olds meet or exceed the provincial standard on province-wide reading, writing and math tests by 2008. That's not an end in itself; that is a means to an end. The end is that those students will be able to go on to have satisfying lives and be part of the workplace and be fully functioning citizens in the province. The means is that they have the literacy and numeracy skills they need.

To date, we've made a number of significant investments to support our education foundations program. Those investments include intensive teacher development and ongoing support—16,000 lead teachers are part of that support; smaller class sizes—we've hired 1,100 new primary teachers in 1,300 schools; and focused curriculum, with a daily emphasis on literacy and numeracy,

again in line with that goal. We've put targeted supports in place, turnaround teams in 100 elementary schools. And we've provided expert coordination through the provincial Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

I want to talk a little bit about the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. Its primary goal is to work with school boards to create a renewed focus on literacy and numeracy. Many of you will know Avis Glaze, the well-known educator who is heading up the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. One of her goals is to share successful practices among schools and districts, to extend the knowledge base of the profession around the province and to thereby increase the capacity to support learning. In order to do that, we're going to have to engage parents, school councils, business, community members and trustees to support our learning achievement goals.

The secretariat is establishing a new way of collaborating across districts. There are many fine practices in this province. One of the things we need to do is link up those parts of the province that need access to those practices with the areas that have already mastered them. That's one of the things that the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat is about.

I want to talk just briefly about high school. We know that there are a number of students in this province who are having a hard time making it through to an apprenticeship or a job placement or to admission to college or university. The Alan King report tells us that about 30% of students are at risk of not graduating from high school this year due to high failure rates in some grade 9 and grade 10 classes. This isn't the students' fault. The government and the school system have to take responsibility. We have an obligation to those students who are falling through the cracks, and doing that is a priority for our government.

Student success leaders are now in place in every school board. We're also working on an outreach program that will encourage employers to create work and co-op opportunities for students and inform parents of the importance of school-to-work experience. There's a real gap between parental expectation and the reality of where students will land, so we need to close that gap and make sure that parents and students have a realistic idea of where they want to be after they leave high school and how they are going to get there.

English-language boards can offer up to six locally developed courses that students can count as compulsory credits toward their graduation diplomas. That will assist in dealing with the local needs.

Finally, two co-op-related courses are available to students so they can get a head start on developing workplace essential skills and work habits. These courses will help prepare students for job placement.

Nous devons offrir à nos enfants l'avantage d'une éducation en Ontario pour qu'ils puissent acquérir les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour trouver de bons emplois et profiter pleinement de la vie. Notre province a aussi besoin de l'avantage offert par l'éducation ontar-

ienne. Nous avons besoin d'une main-d'œuvre d'avenir, d'une main-d'œuvre qui attire les investissements et favorise la croissance et la prospérité économique.

We need to give our children an Ontario education advantage so they can develop the skills they need to get good jobs and enjoy life to the fullest. And our province needs an Ontario education advantage too. We need a workforce of the future, one that attracts investment and supports a strong, prosperous economy.

We need to support our teachers. It is teachers who deliver education. It is teachers who unlock the enthusiasm and the potential of every student in this province. The minister talks about the new three Rs of education: respect, responsibility and results. Respect has been absent from our education system for too long. We have a policy of respect for our teachers as professionals. We can't go forward without showing teachers that respect and encouraging them to be the best they can be on the job, and we know that we have excellent teachers around the province. It's our responsibility to make sure that the system works. And as for results, it is our shared vision and goals for kids that will drive us to the results. We need to help all kids succeed in school. Everyone in the system, including the government, has to work toward that.

This legislation would mean that our terrific Ontario system would be opened up to more students and would expand the current list of exemptions in the Education Act to allow children of certain classes of temporary residents in Canada to attend school in Ontario without paying fees. Our mission and moral purpose are to ensure that children are educated to a high level. It should not matter where you come from, but where you are going.

Our new exemptions would include children whose parents have applied for permanent resident status to Citizenship and Immigration Canada and plan to stay in the country, and children whose parents are studying at a publicly funded Ontario university or college. Currently, the act requires school boards to charge fees, which can be up to \$10,000 annually per child, for temporary residents. This is an exclusive policy at this point, and we need to change that. The act includes several exemptions, including exchange students, children of parents with work permits, and children of diplomats. Boards would need to be able to claim funding for these students under the grants for students' needs.

This government believes that children of immigrant families residing in Ontario should be able to attend school without the payment of fees, regardless of their immigration status. There have been cases where children of immigrant parents are kept at home for long periods because their families do not have proper immigration status and cannot afford to pay fees. That is simply unacceptable in Ontario.

The second reading of the proposed legislation is an important prelude to ensuring that Ontario students enjoy a good outcome in our publicly funded education system. Ontario's education system must be one that welcomes children and ensures that every child has a place to learn



and grow. We know that newcomers to Canada face many challenges, but getting their children into school should not be one of them. Our school system should be welcoming to parents and welcoming to their children so that their children don't have to have an interrupted academic career.

That is what this legislation is about. A good education is too important to waste. All children in our civilized society should be able to attend school and learn. I ask all members of this Legislature to join me in supporting this bill.

**M. Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke-Nord):** Je prends aujourd'hui la parole pour parler des modifications législatives qui, si elles sont adoptées, ouvriront les portes de nos écoles aux enfants d'immigrants récents. Tous les élèves ont besoin de bénéficier des avantages qu'offre une bonne éducation. Je crois sincèrement que l'éducation financée par les deniers publics est la pierre angulaire de toute société équitable, productive, civilisée et cohésive.

Chaque enfant a le droit d'apprendre. Nous avons la charge d'enlever les barrières qui laissent des enfants dans un vide administratif, sans égard au statut d'immigration de leurs parents.

**1600**

Notre mission ici et notre objectif moral consistent à veiller à ce que les enfants suivent des études poussées. Votre lieu d'origine ou votre destination ne devrait pas importer.

Speaker, I support Bill 194, An Act to amend the Education Act, or, as it has become known, "The Right to Attend Act." There are many technical issues that could be examined in depth in this particular bill, but I would like to, with your permission, stress a far more important aspect of this legislation: the message that it sends to hardworking immigrant families who are fast becoming the backbone of this province.

As I have stressed, by the year 2011, immigration will account for all net new labour force growth in Canada. As more and more new Canadians and prospective new Canadians arrive in our country, largely in our province, we as a society must take every possible measure to accommodate them and their families. We need to send a message to these families. We need to show them that we recognize that they are more than our labour force; that they are in fact a part of the fabric of this province and this great country. No other government has shown the kind of genuine, heartfelt support for new Canadians that our government has. Other administrations have recognized, certainly, that immigration is a part of the modern world, but they have not taken the steps to welcome and accommodate this profound demographic shift.

Nous devons offrir à nos enfants l'avantage d'une éducation en Ontario pour qu'ils puissent acquérir les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour trouver de bons emplois et profiter pleinement de la vie. Notre province a aussi besoin de l'avantage offert par l'éducation ontarienne. Nous avons besoin d'une main-d'œuvre pour l'avenir, d'une main-d'œuvre qui attire les investisse-

ments et favorise la croissance et la prospérité économiques.

Chaque enfant doit pouvoir être scolarisé et bâtir son avenir. C'est pourquoi je suis fier aujourd'hui de déposer un nouveau projet de loi qui modifierait la Loi sur l'éducation, qui ouvrirait les portes de l'apprentissage et qui offrirait des possibilités aux enfants qui viennent d'arriver en Ontario, des enfants qui deviendront plus tard des membres à part entière de notre société civilisée.

I conclude by saying this is the right step. It is a bill that new Canadians and indeed all Ontarians can support wholeheartedly, as I urge all members of this Legislature to do. I'll be sharing my time with my colleague.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington):** I rise in the House today in support of this important bill. Last week was Education Week in Ontario, a time to celebrate the good work happening in our schools across the province. There is a lot to celebrate this year. The McGuinty government has worked relentlessly to help students get the education they deserve, an education that will help them to succeed in life. We believe that all Ontario students should have an equal opportunity for a quality education.

This year our government invested an additional \$854 million in Ontario's education system, bringing the total amount since coming to office to a \$1.1-billion increase. We invested \$90 million to help bring down the average class size in JK to grade 3, and to help hire 1,100 new primary teachers to teach those children. Students in approximately 1,300 elementary schools—that's one in three schools—are feeling the difference from this investment. For example, during Education Week, Minister Kennedy visited a school that hired a new grade 3 teacher, which helped reduce the class size to 23 students from a projected 32. Let me tell you, as a former educator, that that makes a significant difference in the time that the teacher can spend with each individual student to ensure they have mastered literacy and numeracy skills.

We have focused on providing our high school students with more opportunities to succeed. To make sure that struggling students get the help they need, we'll keep more students in school and better prepare them for life after high school. We recognize the need for a new, consolidated program to lower dropout rates in Ontario's secondary schools. The changes are complete, and the new curriculum is on-line and being distributed this month. It's all ready for September 2005, a year earlier than planned. This curriculum change is something I lobbied for for a long time, to make sure we align the curriculum for those students who are at academic risk, so that we're actually meeting their needs. I'm very pleased to see that this is going to be in place a year early.

Last June, we announced an additional \$100 million to fix curriculum issues, improve technological education programs and provide other alternatives for struggling students. For example, 3,000 secondary students across the province are benefiting from more than 105 innovative projects funded through an additional \$18-million investment. These projects are designed to provide them

with new opportunities for success in school. I'm pleased that one of those projects is in my riding of Guelph-Wellington. Next week or the week after, I'm going to have an opportunity to go and visit the project and see how it's working out. Just last week, Minister Kennedy visited a high school in North Bay with a program that offers students an alternative way to gain the secondary school credits that they need so badly to graduate. It's innovative projects like these that are providing students across the province with greater opportunities for success in school.

We also helped make schools across Ontario more accessible to community groups. Last July, we provided \$20 million to school boards to open up our schools, creating community hubs where all Ontarians can learn and grow. That means schools will be made available to community groups for 7,000 more hours this year. That's 3,500 more basketball games or 5,000 more Brownie meetings, a significant result for local students, parents and members of the community. I know that in my community, this initiative was very well received. It has opened up the schools and reduced the cost of using schools to a number of community groups. Community partners were just thrilled to be able to have better access to the schools.

By investing \$31 million to keep good schools open, we will benefit 1,149 rural schools. Again, we had talked about the need to expand support for rural schools, so that they can continue to do the job that is so necessary in their communities.

These are just some of the results of our education investments. Clearly, there is still much more that needs to be done. The McGuinty government firmly believes that excellent and public education is critical to our students' and the province's future. We will continue to invest wisely in Ontario's publicly funded education system.

Over the past year and a half, the government's partnership approach has paved the way for an environment of peace and stability, which is critical for success. We are mending wounds that resulted from years of neglect, disrespect and friction. By bringing together both the right financial resources and a spirit of co-operation, we have created a new era in Ontario's public education system that is bringing about positive results for students. I can't emphasize how important it is to have all the partners in education working together again. Having teachers who feel that once again their government values their efforts and having the teachers, the boards and the government all working onside are absolutely essential to the success of public education and to confidence in public education in our province.

1610

Ontario's education system has so much to offer children, and that is why it needs to be accessible to all children, including the children of newcomers. We believe it's important for newcomers to Ontario to be able to get a good outcome from the education system. Chances are these children will end up being our Canadian

citizens. We want them to have every advantage our education system can provide so they can be valuable contributors to our civilized society in turn. We firmly believe that every child has the right to learn.

I ask all members to join me in supporting this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to be able to rise this afternoon and make a few comments. I look forward to the comments by our critic, the member from Oak Ridges, Mr. Klees.

I didn't hear them mention anything today about education and the transportation issue that I think a number of the school bus operators are facing across this province. I had 20-some buses outside of my office last Friday. They're looking for a meeting with the Minister of Education. My understanding is that he refuses to meet with them. I think everybody in this House, unless they've been on another planet, probably understands that gasoline prices and insurance costs are soaring. We haven't seen any adjustment for the school bus operators. I think all they want is to be treated the same as any other stakeholder. So I look forward in this debate to hearing the comments coming back from the government side explaining how they're handling the transportation system.

They promised to implement the Rozanski recommendations. They haven't done that yet. And the school bus operators of the province of Ontario, who transport 800,000 students each and every day of the year safely across our province, should be compensated and be treated with the same respect that all education stakeholders expect to be treated with.

I look forward to hearing those kinds of comments, because I think that's all part of this debate. If we're talking about all the wonderful things this government is supposed to be doing, I want to ask what wonderful things they are doing for the school bus operators of the province, because they do an excellent job. I look forward to hearing positive comments from the government on how they're going to resolve this. Maybe we'll see that tomorrow in the budget, but I don't really think so.

The least I expect to see is the Minister of Education taking the opportunity to meet with these folks and explain his position on why they are being underfunded.

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I listened intently to the members for Don Valley West, Etobicoke North and Guelph-Wellington. I heard a lot said about what is good, at least from their perspective, in the education system of Ontario today. Unfortunately, I never heard anything about what this bill contains or what this bill is supposed to do.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Pure fluff.

**Mr. Prue:** No, I'm not sure that it is fluff.

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** You haven't read it.

**Mr. Prue:** I've read the bill. The bill is only two pages long.

What this bill intends to do, and what I think some serious debate, especially from the government opposite,



has to deal with, is that this is going to include additional students in the education system. There is nothing contained within the body of the bill that says where the money is to come from.

I am in full agreement, and when I get up to speak, I will speak about how we need to educate these students of foreign nationals who are in Canada. These are not immigrants' children. They are not permanent residents' children.

If you read the body of the bill, what is being said is not what is contained within the body of your legislation. There are costs involved that have to be accounted for, there is a funding formula that is going to have to be organized, and the government is going to have to estimate how many children who are not included in the program now are going to be included in the future. This same government is going to have to say whether that money is going to be taken from existing programs, to the detriment of the students who are in the school system now, or whether they have money to be added to the system to accommodate these children who need the education. I hope it's the latter. There is nothing contained in here, nor was there anything said by the first three speakers, that gives any indication of how you're going to pay for this.

I think a lot more needs to be said. I hope further government speakers elaborate on what this bill really stands for.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** I am delighted to rise in debate and follow up on the good point that was made by the member for Beaches–East York, because I note that the member for Simcoe North actually didn't discuss Bill 194 whatsoever. Here we are talking about children and making sure they have access, and we meandered over to the issue of school buses. I might add, I want to congratulate Craig Kipfer and nine school bus operators who came to my riding. Craig gave me a lift over to Stratford General Hospital for a meeting I had.

Getting back to the question of Bill 194, the ministry tells me that there are about 250 students in Ontario who would qualify. Currently most of those students, about 200, are in Toronto, and the good people of the Toronto District School Board actually do not charge them a fee, because they believe they are going to have the residency requirement. But other school boards across Ontario don't do that. Because of the lack of legislative clarity, which we're going to bring to the issue, other school boards have used this as an excuse to deny children or to get fees or to make these parents pay a fee, and then they say, "When you get status in a couple of months, maybe we'll pay you back and maybe we won't." What we're trying to do is have clarity.

Actually, we know there is per pupil funding, so if there are about another 250 students who would be able to benefit from this, at an average grant of about \$8,200, the amount of money we're talking about is not vast in regard to a \$75-billion provincial budget. It would be in the neighbourhood of \$1 million or so. But we would make sure we would have that fairness of access,

particularly, for example, for international students who are coming here to do their post-graduate work, and the question of whether or not their children can be in the program. We know that clergy come to our country for studies or to be part of their religion. Their children have been unduly denied in some cases.

This bill makes sure there is fairness and equity, and I applaud the Minister of Education for bringing the bill in.

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton):** I listened with great interest to the speeches by the members about education and about this piece of legislation, asking for quick passage of it, but they couldn't help but be political.

I was surprised that none of these members talked about the whole issue of school closures. Some people in Nepean were very excited to learn about the moratorium on school closures, and then from this minister, this great—someone called it a white elephant; I call it this great false hope of this great process for school closures. Parents in Nepean, particularly those whose children attend St. Thomas School in Crystal Beach, the Lakeview part of Nepean, are wondering why this government is sitting back and watching the school board close this school. It's a great school board. The chair and the director of education are fine, outstanding people, and so is the local school trustee for this area, but they're redefining the boundaries of the school to basically take all the existing students away so that it falls below a certain threshold and they can close it.

I, as an MPP, never offered any false hope, because I think it's important that you always be honest and upfront with people. That was the hallmark of Frank Klees's time in government. But this false hope has been given to this community. They are just redrawing the boundaries, which will make closing the school lickety-split, with insufficient consultation, according to the community. I'm surprised that the members opposite, when they were speaking, wouldn't have raised the case of school closures, and particularly the parents at St. Thomas School. This goes beyond just a concern that parents at St. Thomas have, but indeed the community association is tremendously concerned. What will this do to the price of people's best, most significant investment? What will it do for the quality of their community if one of the last schools is closed? I would like the members to comment on that.

**The Acting Speaker:** One of the government members has two minutes to reply. I'll turn to the member for Don Valley West.

**Ms. Wynne:** I'm going to address the issues that actually pertain to Bill 194 in the comments from the members for Simcoe North, Beaches–East York, Perth–Middlesex and Nepean–Carleton.

I want to pick up on some of the comments by the member for Beaches–East York. As a Toronto member, I'm sure the member for Beaches–East York understands why this is an important issue. I know that as the former mayor of East York, he represented the areas of Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park, and he understands—

*Interjection.*

1620

**Ms. Wynne:** I'm sorry; not Flemingdon Park but Thorncliffe Park. He understands why it's so critical that children who come to this country, whose parents have applied for status, be allowed to go to school, and he will know that in Toronto that is already the case, because Toronto has for years had such a concentration of new immigrants and the school board has understood how important it is for these large numbers of children to be in school and learning. That reality has to spread across the province as more new immigrants settle in other parts of the province.

This isn't an issue of where the money is going to come from. As the member for Perth—Middlesex pointed out, this is not a huge amount of money. We're talking about another 250 or so children—the ministry has canvassed the boards, and we believe that's the number that will be applying.

For me this issue is one where we don't have any choice. These children must be in our schools. If we are going to have a skilled workforce, if these children, whose families are planning to stay in Ontario, are going to have successful lives as citizens of this province, then we've got to get those kids into school so that they can become acclimatized to the province and can get the academic skills they need. I'm sure the members understand that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Klees:** I'm pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 194. I'd like, first of all, to address some of the specifics of the bill. As well, I would like to speak to the cost issue; not just the cost to the province, but where I believe the funding should come from. I also want to speak to some of the other comments that have been prompted by some of the debate by the members from Don Valley West and Guelph—Wellington.

Let me begin by speaking to the purpose of Bill 194. Of course, I support it wholeheartedly. There isn't a child living in the province of Ontario who should not have the benefit of education, regardless of the status of their parents. We understand that the immigration process can be lengthy, often not the fault of the individual family but of the bureaucratic process that's in place. The children are often the innocent victims of a process that just drags on.

Is it appropriate that students be able to attend class? Of course it is. I must say that in all the time I have been a member of the Legislature—I have many circumstances come to my office where I'm called on to provide some assistance—I have never experienced a family coming to me and expressing a concern about their child not being able to access education. As the member from Don Valley West indicated, many boards already have a policy, be it written or unwritten, that children of immigrant families do in fact have access to education and are not charged for it. To this point there hasn't been a province-wide policy; there hasn't been legislation that ensures that access. For that reason, we have this bill before us today. I don't believe there is any member of

the Legislature who is going to raise any objection or who wouldn't support this.

The bill itself speaks not only to children of immigrants, however, and that's appropriate. I want to read into the record—those who are observing this debate should know that this legislation effectively sets out certain categories, a list, if you will, of circumstances in which a board will not charge a fee.

The first one is “a person who is a participant in an educational exchange program under which a pupil of the board attends a school outside Canada without a fee.” This is very important. I am familiar, and I'm sure many members of the Legislature are as well, with exchange programs. The Rotary Club, for example, is one organization that, to its credit, sponsors student exchanges. Unfortunately, depending on the circumstances and depending on the board, exchange students who have come as part of that in the past have often had to pay a fee. I trust that the interpretation of this bill will be broad enough to encompass that exchange program. It is a worthwhile program. Our students from Ontario who are part of that program and go to other countries benefit from that, and we should reciprocate here as well.

The next category of person who would benefit from this legislation is “a person who is a dependant within the meaning of the Visiting Forces Act (Canada).” Again, this is a circumstance where we would think it need not necessarily be spelled out that it would be a given, but obviously it is not. It is important that this also be included. We have visiting forces, people who are placed on assignment in Ontario. Should their children be able to access school without an additional tuition fee? Of course. In this bill, we have a provision to address that.

A third provision is “a person if that person ... his or her parent or someone else with lawful custody of him,” or her, is in Canada. This, again, is a very important issue. I was speaking to the member from Burlington, who expressed concern. He has constituents who are in that circumstance. In this case, it happens to be grandmother who has temporary custody of a child and is not normally residing in the school district, and there was assessment of a fee for that child to attend a school within that school district. That, of course, creates a hardship on the family. So I am pleased to see this provision in the legislation. Again, we trust that this will be broadly interpreted so that circumstances like this are taken into consideration.

Another category under this provision is for people are “under a temporary resident permit issued under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada),” and also “under diplomatic, consular or official acceptance issued by the government of Canada, or,” under clause (iii), “claiming refugee protection under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada) or having had such protection conferred on him or her.”

This is effectively the thrust of this bill. There are other categories that are simply further explanations of various categories of immigration or being here on a temporary permit. We embrace that. We think it's appropriate, and



it's good to have a province-wide policy in place that is going to ensure that children have the education that they deserve, that they need, and that it's not a financial hardship to the family.

What I find interesting, though, about the legislation—and I trust that it's not going to be an issue—is that the legislation does not say that these children of these families must in fact be accepted into the school within that school board. It simply says that a fee won't be charged. I think that it's important, if from no other perspective than from the debate in the House here, that it is made very clear that not only should a fee not be charged but that every child in Ontario must be given access to education, regardless of the school district within which they reside.

1630

On the issue of funding, it's interesting that I heard the member from Perth-Middlesex, in response to the issue that was raised by the member from the third party that nothing is mentioned about funding, indicate that for the number of children that's estimated—about 250—the cost would be insignificant: about \$1 million. Well, on two counts I would take exception to that remark. First of all, that \$1 million is not a lot of money: I'm not surprised that I hear that from a Liberal member of this Legislature, because based on how they are treating tax dollars and their track record over the last two years while in office, they obviously feel that \$1 million is nothing, is insignificant. I think that people who are observing this debate should be concerned about that attitude.

A budget is going to be presented in this place tomorrow, and it will be very interesting to see how that budget is communicated. There is no doubt that there will be billions of dollars announced for programs not only in education but in other areas. I can tell you that none of us in this House will be surprised to find that the issue of deficit spending is not going to be a matter of consideration for the Minister of Finance; this coming from a political party that while on the campaign trail made a commitment that they would not spend more than they take in—when a government does that, it creates a deficit; this coming from a government that for the first two years while they were in office claimed day in and day out that they were not able to deliver health care, that they were not able to keep sundry promises because of this \$5.6-billion deficit that supposedly the previous government had left. But what they didn't talk about was that, being the government, they have a responsibility to ensure a balanced budget and to do something about that and to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being dealt with responsibly. So on that point, I take exception to the attitude that the member expressed: "It's just \$1 million."

Second, I want to correct the member, because not only is it the attitude about \$1 million, but it's not \$1 million. It's at least \$2 million, and it's simple arithmetic. We have again from this government a member who not only does not know how much it's going to cost, but who says, "That is irrelevant." I think that speaks volumes to

people who are observing this debate, because the cost is at least \$2 million.

Is it \$2 million well spent? Yes, it is. Do we deny that investment in our children? No. It's an appropriate place to put an investment.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Klees:** The member from Don Valley West is carping in the background. The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education carps at these remarks. I can say, I would much rather endorse \$2 million being invested here than the \$450 million that this government announced to build a new casino hotel in Windsor. They can do that without even blinking an eye. They can do that without any hesitation of consideration that there are priorities that this government is saying they cannot fund because they don't have the money. And I ask, where is the moral justification for that kind of decision-making? The cost is \$2 million.

The point I simply want to make on the record is that the reason these children are here and accessing education is because of an immigration system that is controlled by the federal government, and I would hope that these funds that are an additional cost to the taxpayers of Ontario are in turn paid for by the federal government, that this becomes part of the settlement strategy that the Premier has been negotiating with the Prime Minister. I think that's reasonable. I would hope that is an item that is on the table with the Premier in discussions with the federal government. I want to reaffirm my support for this legislation. I believe that with every piece of legislation that comes before the House, the government has a responsibility to consider the cost, to consider the source of that funding, and I would expect that in this case they will do so as well.

I want to speak to another issue that arises from a comment made by the member from Don Valley West, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. She said in her remarks, "Every child has the right to learn." That is, as she put it, a cornerstone belief of this government. I found it quite interesting that the member from Guelph-Wellington reiterated that dictum in her speech. What was it that she said? "Every child has the right to an education." Well, I agree with that too. But I'm going to put the question to the Minister of Education and to the Premier and to the parliamentary assistant and to the member from Guelph-Wellington: If, in fact, your government believes that, then why are you denying that same right to learn to autistic children beyond the age of six? Why?

You know that the Premier made a commitment in writing to parents of autistic children while he was looking for votes, while he wanted the office of Premier. He travelled the province and he told autistic children and their parents, "Elect me as Premier, and I will ensure that this inequity is righted. Autistic children beyond the age of six will receive appropriate funding so that they can learn," as the member for Guelph-Wellington, as the member for Don Valley West—and I don't hear her carping now. She is silenced because her dictum that

every child has the right to learn obviously doesn't apply to autistic children. It does apply to children of immigrants. It does apply to every other child in Ontario, apparently. Why doesn't it apply to autistic children? I find that offensive. Every parent of an autistic child in this province should find that offensive. They should look at the rhetoric of members of the government in their debate over the last 45 minutes on this bill and ask the question, "Why don't you feel the same way about us and our children?" That's what I ask members of the government to do. Read your own words out of Hansard in this debate and then ask yourself the question, "How can I support my own government on the issue of how they're treating autistic children?"

1640

I also want to speak to the issue of transportation. I, too, had visitors in my office this past Friday. I believe every member of the Legislature was visited by individuals who have the responsibility to transport our children every school day. They are responsible for their safety on the road. There are more than 200 private operators, companies that transport more than 800,000 children every day in this province. They do a good job. Their appeal was that this government is refusing to recognize the increased costs of transportation, the increased cost of fuel, the increased cost of insurance, the increased cost of labour, the increased cost of repairs to maintain their buses in a safe manner.

Not only is there not an increase in what they receive—by the way, you will know that the government's response even today in question period was to say, "We increased funding to transportation by 5%." What they're not telling you is that that is a global amount. It is without regard to the increase of actual students that need to be transported within various school districts. It has nothing at all to do with the increase in student population, and it also has nothing to do with where the students are. Isn't it interesting that in the Toronto school boards there are transportation components and transfer payments made to those school boards for students who need no transportation costs. That has to be looked at.

Here's the issue: In York region, not only has there not been an increase in funding for transportation, but there is negotiation today ongoing, with the school boards attempting to claw back 5% from the school bus operators. The question they ask is, "How can we continue to transport students safely in that environment?"

There are a number of issues like that where the government is very good at making announcements and pronouncements, but there is very little substance to support it. On this bill, I believe the government is doing the right thing and we will support them. However, on many other issues this government is not only failing students, they're failing parents.

In closing, I want to bring to your attention that the Minister of Education in the House today, I believe, made a statement that was uncalled for and unbecoming a minister of the crown. In response to a question I put to the minister, he made the comment that private schools in

this province are—I'm going to check my file here because I don't want to misquote the minister. So with your permission I will get this information.

**Mr. Baird:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wonder if you could tell the House, while the member for Oak Ridges is checking his files—I notice you like to check your files too in this place, so I assume you would say that it is in order when one wants to check his files, whether they be electronic or otherwise.

**The Acting Speaker:** I have to say that it is the practice in this House that members are not to use electronic devices in an unnecessarily obtrusive way, so I would ask the member for Oak Ridges if he is prepared to continue his remarks.

**Mr. Klees:** Speaker, I certainly apologize for that, but in the interest of being accurate, I took that liberty, and I thank you for that.

The minister stood in his place today and referred to private schools as a bad habit of the previous government. I believe the Minister of Education should make a public apology to the more than 100,000 students who attend private schools in this province. He should apologize publicly to every educator employed in the private school system. He should apologize to every institution that has contributed to the foundation of education in this province.

This minister has not made the transition from being a partisan politician to being a minister of the crown. That, I believe, calls for an apology on the part of this minister. I ask you, Speaker, to check the record and assist me in bringing the minister to order on this matter.

**The Acting Speaker:** I don't think that's the responsibility of the Speaker, but it's kind of you to ask.

I will turn now to the member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** It is a pleasure to follow the member from Oak Ridges, our education critic. I have the greatest respect for the work he has done and his commitment to education for all children. It's a privilege to speak today. I say right from the outset, in support of the intent of Bill 194, that it's sort of like the debate going on in Ottawa as the Liberal government seems to wrap itself continuously in the flag. As to all persons who choose Canada as their country or are visitors here, I think all parties would embrace the notion outlined in Bill 194. It's that kind of occasion in this House where we agree, and what's often missing are the apparent truths that should be part of the full debate.

I was preparing for my opportunity this afternoon rather hastily, because I understand our critic is suffering from a bit of a larynx problem and he needed some support on this bill—not support in his commitment but because of his larynx. He does speak in public; some would say too often. But I have the greatest respect for his commitment. I'm going to repeat much of what he said.

All children should have access to education. That's a fundamental right, in my view. I can tell you as a parent of five children that education is the true passport to one's future. I would encourage education to be access-



ible and available to all children. That is where the real nub of the question comes. It's a difficult challenge for the current government. The Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty has failed people across this province on this file.

I, unfortunately, will now dive into some of the more controversial areas that even the member from Oak Ridges was kind enough to bring to the attention of viewers and those few members in attendance in the House as I speak. I looked at the bill itself. It's rather a small bill. The viewers should know that it's less than one page. Of course, they're printed in both official languages.

1650

The preamble here is quite small. It says, "The bill repeals and replaces subsection 49(7) of the Education Act and makes certain other related changes to the act." The intent here is to make sure that children have access to education without a charge.

Here's the ever-encompassing clause: "Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, enacts" the following changes.

One of the changes that I found here—often you must read the fine print to know what's really happening here—is, "A board shall not charge a fee to...", and it goes on to outline in three sections and some subgroups under what conditions.

This is the condition issue. This is first, under (7)(a): "... a person who is a participant in an educational exchange program under which a pupil of the board attends a school outside Canada without a fee." There is the condition, see? The subtlety of this legal language here is the proviso that if the school outside of Canada—if there's an exchange program—doesn't charge a fee, then we won't charge a fee. If they charge a fee, we will charge a fee; if they don't, we won't. So it's not like it's universal access.

If you go on further, you will see that the section goes on to say, "... a person if that person is awaiting determination of an application for permanent residence..." That's understood.

This is an interesting one here. In (7)(c), it says, "... if that person, his or her parent or someone else with lawful custody of him or her is in Canada..."

Let's imagine that the parents were transferred to the United States and the children were then living with the grandparents for a while or that the children were American, and because of business and other kinds of complications about a country—the implementation question here is, if they would have been charged fees in the United States, what would the case be here in Canada?

I say to you that it's not, in all cases, what one hears coming from the Liberal minister's pronouncements—which often happen during the election. One thing is said under these contexts; something quite different is said on the implementation.

In fact, it's important to bring into debate today that yesterday the House debated Bill 118. We voted, I might

say, unanimously in support of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act—a new era of accessibility beginning in Ontario.

I want to recognize the work done by the member from Burlington, Cam Jackson. Cam Jackson is really the author of the disabilities act. There have been some changes to it. Out of respect, I think there has been work done by all parties.

This bill here says, "A new era for accessibility begins in Ontario." If you talk about children with special needs, it has already been established, but prior to the election, the Liberal government, before they were a government, promised to address the autistic issue. They promised that no child would be denied. It went to the courts, and the courts ruled that they should be fulfilling that commitment. In fact, the NDP have asked several questions, as has our critic, about why they have denied children with autism full access to the services that they need. We're talking about our own students, our own children. I'm trying to see how the implementation of this bill creates some issues—full access to various pieces of legislation. I would say to you that—

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Wilkinson:** You're checking your files.

**Mr. O'Toole:** No, I'm turning off my files now. I didn't know, and now it's off.

**The Acting Speaker:** Will the member for Durham take his seat.

I'm compelled to remind the House that the use of electronic devices while we're in the chamber cannot be overt.

I would again return to the member for Durham.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I respectfully acknowledge that I was out of order for doing that. I can assure you it will not happen again this afternoon, because he has taken it from me. I mean that respectfully, Speaker.

The autism argument needs to be reflected on for a few moments, so I'm just going to speak a little bit more slowly here. Children with special needs—and I see Mr. Levac, the government whip. He has a very important bill, I might say, on education, which is an access issue; it's addressing the needs. The member from Brant knows full well that I support Bill 3. These are children suffering from anaphylactic shock and other things that affect their environment. I support the bill. I'm surprised that the Premier hasn't seen fit to bring that bill forward. I hope it's wrapped up into the end-of-session bills and dealt with accordingly, and you will have my support on that. Along with my Bill 137 which is the transit tax credit, it helps people who help themselves. It's a very fundamental Conservative bill, technically.

On the autism issue, I think if you broaden it out to the general special needs, it's very important. I'm hearing quite a lot of difficulty—in the French language, public boards are having problems, the amount of enrolment and the difficulties placed on those families of making sure those children are transported to schools close by in their jurisdiction. I will say on the public record here that that's an accessibility issue. The French Catholic boards,

because they have more density of population, aren't experiencing quite as many deliverable difficulties. But when the minister says that he's making accessibility to education equal so that all children should have access to education, let's be straightforward. Let's look at the First Nations issues, let's look at the French-language issues, let's look at Ontario citizens' access to special programming, not just autism. In a general sense, each individual child today—the Education Quality and Accountability Office has determined that children who don't pass certain testing have to have an individual education plan, an IEP. That's an accessibility issue, because I believe that if they're not delivering those accessible programs for each child because of sparsity or because of resources, then the minister must take responsibility for the ongoing programming within each school today.

I can tell you, it's my understanding from the briefing I have here that if this Bill 194 is passed, there is a cost of approximately \$2 million per year. In the context of an \$80-billion budget and potentially a \$15-billion education budget, that is not considered to be a large amount of money. But if I look at it, it is about 250 children. So in that context, it is a significant amount of money on a per capita basis. If I just did the math on that, I would think that every child should have equal access to equal funding.

Which brings me to the broad, broad argument of why they had the Royal Commission on Learning. The Royal Commission on Learning was all about each child having access to an adequately funded education in the province of Ontario. The Royal Commission on Learning said that the province of Ontario should fund education. What had happened up to that time, prior to 1995—and David Cooke is now working in Thunder Bay on the issue of school closures there, and that's a whole different issue of access. We won't go there. I have a lot of respect for David Cooke. I had the privilege of being a trustee for a few years and so I know the challenges of distance and sparse population. David Cooke from the Royal Commission on Learning set up the EQAO, the Education Quality and Accountability Office. He also set up the College of Teachers. He also implemented the new curriculum program. He also made recommendations that the government fund education, that the province of Ontario fund education.

What had happened was that historically, about 50% of the funding for public education, and in some cases more, came from the province. In the city of Toronto, they had so much assessment wealth, that is, the municipal tax base, that they received very little. In fact, they received negative grants. The city of Toronto, the city of Ottawa, large, well-developed commercial cities, had a significant tax base municipally, so they funded education inequitably. And it was a large issue in the 1980s when I was a school trustee, that said that places like Durham region—and Brant, for instance, would probably be another area with not a very rich assessment base, municipal tax base—were underfunded compared to other school jurisdictions within the province. So if

you fully embrace this accessibility issue, which comes down to funding and equal access to quality programming in a public education system, they are far short of fulfilling that commitment at all.

1700

I put to you that the Royal Commission on Learning had about 130 recommendations, and those were the navigational aid for us when we were government, under John Snobelen and others, in implementing those reforms. We tried to find a way of relieving the municipal tax base support for education and having it funded, for the most part, by the province.

What happened was that prior to the implementation of the per student education funding model, some areas of the province were funded at about \$7,500 to \$8,000 per student, whereas some parts of the province were funded at about \$4,000 to \$5,000. That is not equitable funding. During that time, and going forward even to today, there are certain parts of the province, because of difficulties with French language, sparse population, difficult-to-serve communities and scarce teaching and other resources—it's more expensive to deliver programs to children with special needs and children with language preferences, and I want to be clearly on the record as being all for student and parent choice, more directly and more specifically in the secondary school panel.

In the limited time I have, I will try to wrap this around Bill 194, which says that every child should have access to an education—and I'm broadening it to the children of Ontario, and we welcome the children of people who choose Canada. My history here tells me that all things come down to the financial model. I'm looking at the Liberal government's own fiscal analysis. That is what this document is. It's not a leaked confidential document. It's a public document, and it is about education: Projected School Board Funding for the year 2004-05. This was in their budget, and I'm going to share with the people of Ontario what the actual funding was, prior to the election and post-election.

They say, "We have put in millions and millions and millions of dollars." In fact, in the last couple of weeks they've spent billions of dollars, and I'll get to that. People listening should understand that in education about 75% of the total budget of a school board is wages and benefits. I don't say that's wrong; that's the reality. So when you get a negotiated settlement for 10% over the next four years, that's really about 8% of their total spending that is accounted for on all these grants.

The minister announced he was going to deal with the prep time issue in the elementary panel. I'd probably support that; my wife is an elementary teacher. They probably teach in eight subject areas that are very important in the formation, primarily in the primary grades. They're learning to read and decode information, and I believe they need a lot of one on one in smaller classes to get them an early and quick start in education. I think it is fundamental to their pathway in life. The argument needs to be understood that if you do that and increase the funding, there's really no more service. It's for wages and benefits. Let's be clear on that.



We talked about teacher testing—those who may not be in the right career. There are probably some politicians who aren't in the right career. There are probably some police officers and people working at IBM—people who make career choice mistakes. That could happen in any career, including teaching. The vast majority are qualified, dedicated, professional teachers, and the union wants to turn down the temperature, just like the director of the Toronto District School Board said earlier today, and I will get to that as well. I was talking to David Reid about the article in the paper today—we need to turn down the temperature a little bit.

On education funding, in 1998-99, actual spending was \$12.3 billion; in 1999-2000, it was \$12.4 billion; in 2000-01, it was \$12.8 billion; in 2001-02, still under a Tory government, it was \$13.1 billion; in 2002-03, it was \$14 billion. In 2003-04—now, that's where the government changed—it went to \$14.5 billion. It did go up \$200 million. In 2003-04 revised, it went up about \$400 million. In 2004-05, it went to \$14.9 billion. So yes, they've put more funding into education. I would not disagree with that. But some of their solutions haven't improved access; they really fundamentally haven't improved access.

It's not just as simple as the argument raised this past Friday in my riding, when I had visits from the School Bus Operators' Association of Ontario. Several school bus operators appeared, and I will get their names on the record here eventually. They were saying that the difficulties in delivering children to school—it's hard to break this down, because we're spending more money. At the same time, a greater and greater percentage of the budget is actually for wages and benefits. No one argues with that, fundamentally. But what it means that is you have to increase the footprint of the school, because the non-teaching staff in the school also need to be paid. The more of that pay that creeps up into this is crowding out the amount of money they actually get to spend to defray the cost for the non-teaching—these are the supply, the support, the secretarial, the principals, the librarians—not that they don't teach; they are all part of a team deal. You have to have a larger footprint. The footprint that actually works is about 500 students. When you look at small-town Ontario, you have a larger catchment area, so you get into huge transportation issues. The logistics of bringing those children, whether it's French-language or it's the English panels of the four school systems—in fact, I put to you that there are five school systems in Ontario. The independent schools are a school system. As has been said earlier, the independent schools today reflect over a million students whose family, for whatever reason, chooses to send their students there.

I've established the point that the greatest amount of funding for education—more recently, almost \$2 billion has been committed by Minister Kennedy, the Minister of Education, and that \$2 billion is addressing two issues. Fundamentally, it's sort of a class size issue. Secondly, it's a prep time issue in the elementary school panel, and it's an equalization factor in the secondary panel. I would

say the only thing I disagree with entirely is that there should be some measurement of outcomes or performance, as in any profession. Some are good at it, whether it's lawyers or engineers or doctors. There's a method of oversight from a college. The Ontario College of Teachers needs to have independence to assess the performance and discipline—if it's interfering with a child in some way, to deal with those in the appropriate, independent manner, rather than in a union environment. That's the big issue here. At the end of the day—and I'm not union-bashing—there are workplace issues that need a forum for being addressed, but more importantly, there are professional pedagogical issues that should be dealt with by the college, as the College of Nurses would, as the college of dentists would, as the College of Physicians and Surgeons would. There needs to be a process there to measure effectiveness and outcome and professional due diligence.

But when you look at the overall negotiated issues—I'm just focusing on that for a few minutes. In their own budget document last year, and I'm reading this from the May 18, 2004, budget—we're going to have the budget here tomorrow—this is the impact that you should be aware of. As it applies to OHIP, there are over 21,000 physicians in Ontario. For every 1% of increase in their base, in their formula, the OHIP billable services—it's \$58 million. You can do the math, if it's half a billion dollars for a 10% increase. For instance, there are 40,000 nurses in Ontario. Every 1% pay increase they receive is \$34 million.

In elementary and secondary school, there are 180,000 staff, including teachers, principals, administrators etc. For every 1% increase, it's \$115 million. You can do the numbers: a 10% increase is \$1.15 billion. So when you look at the numbers, it's doing nothing for the access. None of the content issues are being addressed. In the broader public sector there are 60,000 public servants, many professional people who help us do our jobs and perform them as well as we can. Every 1% is \$45 million. All of this, whether it is the \$80-billion budget provincially or the \$15-billion budget of the school boards, is wages and benefits. Ultimately, that is the issue here.

1710

When I heard the school bus operators, Archie Groth and others, speak to me on Friday, I was impressed with their commitment to education. Archie and Brian Lemieux from both Phoenix Transportation and Laidlaw transportation systems, which help to deliver the children in the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, the Durham school boards—public and separate—as well as probably Trillium Lakelands board, are asking for this small amount of money. The amount of money they are actually asking for is about 20 cents per child, per day to ensure that the children in this large footprint of schools get to school safely. I don't think it's too much to ask or expect and I support the school bus operators on their quest. It actually amounts to \$14 per day, per bus. I feel,

quite honestly, that the delivery of children to schools is about access to education. When you look at reducing the number of schools, closing schools, some would say it's a double-edged sword; it's difficult to deal with.

Here is the director of education for the Toronto District School Board. Talk about density of student population: There are 265,000 elementary and secondary school students involved. The director, David Reid, to his credit, said in this morning's Toronto Star that he was losing patience with the lack of progress in negotiations with the 12,000 support workers. He went on to say such things as, "Education is for our children." That's first and foremost; that's the primary focus of the whole enterprise here. As parents, you should be outraged if this is not meeting the needs of your child, whether it is special ed or cleanliness of the schools. He says, "We need to clean up our schools, clean up our washrooms and clean up this act," wrote Reid, who also warned that budget discussions at the board would present a significant challenge this year even though the Toronto District School Board has received an increase in its budget."

He couldn't have said it any more succinctly. He went on to say, "We will need additional capacity to spend money differently." Oh, that word "different" comes in; that is change. All people resist change. I understand that. We did when we became opposition, and I could never become comfortable in opposition, but our duties are different. "This will require boards to have a serious look at the twinning of schools, the closure of pools and other measures that may not be popular with everyone," Reid warned in the memo." There you have it: He is making choices by putting children first. That, to my mind, is about access to quality education. Children and their families deserve nothing less.

I've made the argument that no one at all has a dispute with paying professional people appropriately. I want to be on the record with that, as long as it doesn't affect my wife's pay, because that would be a conflict: my arguing in favour of her getting a raise, and a much more lucrative pension than we have. They should have the same pension as we have. No, that is not fair, because we have no pension, so get that straight. I would say that, yes, the pension issue is the issue that took David Peterson down in the 1990 election. Did you know that? The pension issue is what took David Peterson down.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Big rally down in Hamilton.

**Mr. O'Toole:** Oh, yes. I would say to you that in every case, whether it's delivering for new Canadians or for children with special needs, what is missing from this discussion is parent choice. I don't like to be personal here, but your wife is a French-language teacher, a French immersion teacher, I believe, and you have three children. You believe in the importance of public education, as I do, as the parent of five; a couple of them are teachers. I think that needs to be said. But what is missing in all this debate—this may be a bit of a wrinkle on Bill 194; Mr. Levac is a former principal as well, from

Brant, and I know his heart is in education as well—is parent choice, which is really key to this whole debate.

Why do I bring it up in this context of new Canadians, people who are coming to Canada? Well, I'll tell you. It does make sense, because if you read about the \$5.75 billion that the federal government announced—Ralph Goodale, Jack Layton and Prime Minister Paul Martin, and Dalton tagged along as well for part of that announcement—even Goodale says it's less than a third. John Baird would know; he'll soon be in Ottawa to actually feed back—

**Mr. Baird:** I was there to support Dalton.

**Mr. O'Toole:** He was up there to support Dalton.

Here is what it said. There's one very important piece here. It says, "McGuinty noted that under the agreement the average annual spending on immigration settlement services in Ontario"—settlement services? That's about language, that's about adjusting to the new culture and language and blah, blah, blah—"would rise to about \$3,400 ... from \$819." Now, what is neat about this and how it fits into this discussion about access for all children is that in many cases we're talking about children whose first language may not be French or English. When you look at this whole plan, the jobs and training, what about the adults being trained to teach ESL to new Canadian children whose first language is not English or French, teaching them once they have mastered the literacy?

I think there's money here, in the retraining and re-settlement, to engage new immigrants to Canada who have been here for a number of years and have mastered English to teach it, because they may already speak the native language of the child they're dealing with. That would be the parents' choice, to have their children and their cultural traditions respected. Now it may be a stretch. I know the Liberals have this way of thinking in the box a bit on this, but there is an innovative way for them to really harness the energies and talents of new Canadians, the immigrants of Canada who make up this rich, vibrant multicultural mosaic we talk about, in a really meaningful way, to help the transition of those children to the new languages and cultures in Canada, using the skills of those new Canadians in a teaching environment. They have been underutilized. They are underemployed today, many of them driving taxis. Many of them would have been teachers in those countries, whether it's the Netherlands, Sweden, Afghanistan or Turkey. Who knows where they are liable to be coming from? They have mastered the skills of learning a new language.

I put it to you honestly that when I was transferred to Quebec in my job with General Motors, I went to the French-language schools. I was working as a programmer at the time. I was operating in COBOL, which is common business-oriented language, so I didn't really have a lot of time to use that language, only with the computer kind of thing. The difficulty for me was that the person teaching me had French as their first language. If they had used my native language and taught me how



they learned the transition, I think I would have been more comfortable. They were very comfortable in their first language, but I was not comfortable in their first language.

For instance, say that a person from Turkey who is here as a taxi driver had a reasonable mastery of English, and certainly knew the Turkish language. Dealing with a Turkish child, helping them to make the transition alongside them, partnering with them in learning the skills of a new language, would help both people and they would be gainfully, meaningfully engaged. No, they don't have teacher certification. The unions would say no. That's the problem here. It's just an idea I put on the table, because as I said in my remarks, every child should have access to an education, whether it is special education, language education or just adjusting to living in a new country.

I will be supporting the bill, because, as I said, the cost of schooling these children should fall under the responsibility of the federal government. Yes, it's repatriation. The McGuinty government should be demanding that the federal government pay the cost involved. I agree with that and I think it could be easily argued, as I've established, in the new funding model under Ralph Goodale and Jack Layton, which Dalton helped out a bit with, that this could actually work.

1720

If there's a bit of creative thinking here, there's an opportunity for new Canadians to be fully and gainfully employed with their children, and their relatives' children in many cases, coming to Canada to enjoy and fully be engaged in a meaningful way in this great province. It's going to take courage and leadership. I believe that John Tory, our leader, is the kind of person who understands the dynamics of changing to the demands of the time.

What's missing from this is—the jargon I'm hearing from Gerard Kennedy, repeatedly, is right from the OSSTF handbook or the OECTA handbook. He's been hoodwinked. There's no solution that doesn't fit their equation. That's why there are still work-to-rules in Toronto. I see it into the future. As I look into the crystal ball, I don't think much is going to change here, except the government in 2007. So there's a lot to be contemplated here. It is their turn to govern. I have little confidence in what they say, but it is time to consider the choices that need to be made. Let's put our children first and let's make this bill one example of being innovative and recognizing the talents of all cultures in this great province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Prue:** I listened to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Prue:** No, I'm not. Thank you.

I listened to the two debaters, one from Oak Ridges and one from Durham, and what they had to say. To the member from Oak Ridges, he was correct. If you use the simple mathematics of what the Liberals have said, if there are indeed only 250 children—I will be disputing that in my own speech—at a cost of \$8,000 on average, the simple mathematics says that is some \$2 million. He

is also correct that this government is not doing nearly enough for other children in this province who need help. It is all well and good to be passing this bill, and I will be supporting this bill provided there is sufficient money set aside for it, but this is the same government that is not doing what they promised to do for autistic children in the school system. It is the same government that is taking parents to court rather than providing extra help for those children in the school system. I know that would cost at least \$2 million, and probably much more than \$2 million in a province the size of Ontario, but I have to look at that in conjunction with this bill. If this government is not convicted—convinced enough to do—

**Mr. Baird:** Convicted?

**Mr. Prue:** Convicted: No, that's the other one. If it is not convinced enough to do what is right for the children who live here, I remain a little bit skeptical about whether or not they will be convinced enough to do what is necessary for the children of those who do not have status in this country.

There is also a very real pressure on the boards, which the member from Durham has talked about. There is a very real pressure on having enough teachers, on having crumbling school systems, on having buildings that need new roofs, on having janitors and secretaries and vice-principals. That needs to be addressed too, and it needs to be done in conjunction with this bill to make sure we do not rob from one to do the other.

**Ms. Wynne:** I'm happy to comment on the comments of the member for Oak Ridges and the member for Durham. In fact, I think the member for Oak Ridges could be named the member for private education, because the theme of what that member talked about really was support for private education. The bad habit that I believe the minister was referring to earlier was the bad habit of closing schools and opening hundreds of private schools, so we have—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Wynne:** No, there is no apology necessary for supporting public education, which is what this government is doing. For the members in the party opposite who are intent upon privatization of schools, that's not what we're about. We are putting our money and our efforts into the public education system.

As for the concern about children with autism, I think what we need to be clear about is that this is not an either/or situation. We're not saying that this legislation is opening the door. There is a system in place for children with autism. There has been \$30 million put into the system for autism—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the House to come to order. Member for Don Valley West.

**Ms. Wynne:** I'm happy to have struck a chord, Mr. Speaker. This government has put more money into dealing with autism than for many years. We are in the process of putting those supports in place. This is not either/or. What this legislation, Bill 194, does is open the door to a group of students who have been excluded.

Children with autism are not excluded from our school system.

I'm happy that both members are going to be able to support the legislation. They were in office for eight years. It's interesting that they didn't open the doors to the public education system, but we are going to be doing that.

**Mr. Dunlop:** I'm pleased to respond to the comments from the members for Oak Ridges and Durham on their speeches this afternoon. They actually used the whole hour of the leadoff, which is interesting. We should do that more often in this House.

What's really important—and I heard the member from Don Valley East just say how much they care about public education. If they care about public education, they can start with the school bus operators. Eight hundred—

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron—Bruce):** Don Valley West.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Wherever she's from; I don't know.

It's clear: We saw school bus operators from across this province come to our constituency offices last Friday. They have a huge concern. They transport our children and grandchildren across this province. They are being severely underfunded. So for a government that cares about people, cares about education, let's start with the people who transport our children and our grandchildren to schools. I think that's an important thing.

Second of all, John Tory, Ernie Eves and Mike Harris never lied to an autistic child—never. They have never done that. Dalton McGuinty promised support for autism and has not come through with it. It's as simple as that. Now our offices are being inundated with calls and letters asking why Mr. McGuinty has not supported autistic children over the age of six with IBI treatment. In fact, he's taking them to court to fight them. That's the bottom line. He made a promise; he did not commit to it.

Here we go again. We're starting into another budget tomorrow. There will not be enough money for them.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Simcoe North.

**Mr. Dunlop:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line here is that they can stand and brag about Bill 194, but there are a lot of problems in the education system, a lot of problems that this government committed to: more money for transportation, part of the Rozanski recommendations—they have not fulfilled that recommendation; autism—they have not fulfilled that promise. They broke that promise. As I said before, Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and John Tory have never lied to an autistic child.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm going to remind the members of the House that we refer to honourable members by their riding names, not by their surnames.

We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** For those who are listening in this House and for those who are listening using the TV, this is about Bill 194. I thought maybe we should

talk about Bill 194 for a moment. We've heard the opposition speak to us for—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Nepean—Carleton, please come to order. Member for Brant.

**Mr. Levac:** No matter what they say or do, I'm going to talk about Bill 194, because that's what we're talking about. We're talking about Bill 194. This is to make sure that those children who have come from other countries, who were not eligible to get an education, get an education. That's what this is about.

Isn't it interesting that we've allowed this debate to happen for an hour and a half and we've—look, I want to tell you something. I think the member from Beaches—East York has some experience in this area, and I look forward to his speech because I know he's had background in immigration. He's going to talk to us a little bit about the actual content of this bill. I'm more than willing to listen to what the member has to say.

The opposition is doing what it's supposed to do. Let's make sure we understand that. It's supposed to take these little sticks and poke and poke, and try to say that we're doing everything wrong. Quite frankly, Bill 194 is going to correct a wrong. It's wrong that children who are coming from other countries are not getting an education, and that's what this bill is going to do. Quite clearly, it's very explicit about what it's trying to do. It's saying that if we have people coming from another country who are bringing children with them, they can be put inside the education system and not be charged fees. That's a right thing to do. It's an intelligent thing to do. Even if they leave us, they're leaving us with some more education and a good feeling about what Canada is all about, what Ontario is all about. We're sending a signal that we prioritize our children's education as the number one thing in this province.

1730

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Durham has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. O'Toole:** I do appreciate the response from members. Bill 194 is somewhat harmonious among all parties, I believe.

The member from Beaches—East York talked about the Liberal math program, and he's right. If you look at the briefing note on this, their forecast of about \$2 million is somewhat light, because it could cost \$10,000 per year per child. That's what the notes are saying here.

The member from Don Valley West talked about the arguments being made by our critic, Frank Klees, about choice. It's clear that she's opposed to any choice in education. I understand that. That's the dogma of the teacher-public education community. I would only say with respect to the choice issue that there is an argument to be established on the autism debate, which she has ducked.

When you talk about closing schools, talk to the people in Thunder Bay. When you were in opposition—you weren't here, of course, so you wouldn't know, but there are members here today who were in opposition—you



ranted and railed about closing schools. I'll tell you one thing: Cartwright Secondary School in Blackstock is a classic example. You never want to try to close that school. It will be a hard battle, I'll tell you.

The member from Simcoe North really did address the important issue of school bus operators. They're asking for 20 cents per day per child to ensure safe transportation. No one could deny the importance and the necessity of addressing that need.

I want to put on the record in the brief moment left some persons who have contributed to my appreciation. I thank Cathy Abraham of the Ontario Public School Board's Association for her position paper on special education funding, as well as St. Elizabeth Catholic School, where I had the privilege of reading last week. This was arranged by Jennifer Matesic. I also want to recognize the work done by Willie Woo, who is on the school planning council. Their graduation on June 29 at Clarke High School is very important as well.

I believe there's universal acceptance of this bill. We will be supporting it, but, once again, I have no confidence in their ability to deliver anything the way they said it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Prue:** Before I begin the debate, I would request unanimous consent to stand down the lead for my colleague Mr. Marchese from Trinity-Spadina, who is in committee at the moment, until the next date.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Beaches-East York has sought unanimous consent to stand down the leadoff speech until the next rotation. Is there consent in the House? Agreed.

**Mr. Prue:** I have 20 minutes, then, and I'm going to try to give you my 20 minutes' worth of immigration experience and what this bill really will do. Many members in this House have been talking about school buses, about the education system and about autism, but they haven't been talking about what this bill is going to do if implemented and the potential costs that are involved.

I have to state at the outset that I am in favour of the bill. I think New Democrats will generally support the bill, because we believe that every child in this province, every child in this country, deserves an education. It does not matter what the status of their parents is, they deserve an opportunity to go to school. They deserve an opportunity to have an education. Even should they not remain in Canada in the long term, it is not in their best interests or in our country's best interests to deny them an education.

Having said that, we also understand, and you must understand, that what this bill will do is involve a lot more children, I am suggesting to you, than the 250 who have been named by the various school boards. I will go through that in short order, line by line, and the people who are likely to be impacted and what these provisions actually mean, because they are hugely technical. I don't think a lot of people even understand the difference between a permanent resident and an immigrant.

They don't understand the difference between a refugee and a refugee claimant. I'm going to try to give

you some experience on what this bill means and what is going to be involved.

I also think the government needs to do a very good cost analysis before this bill actually is put into law, to make sure there are sufficient funds available to do what this bill purports to do and what this bill will in fact do if it becomes law in September as set out in the statute.

The government has an obligation to help all the children of Ontario. It has an obligation to especially help those who are in the most need of education. I would put the three greatest needs quite clearly as being those with special needs, those who are suffering from autism—that's all I'm going to say about that—and those who have come from other countries and who have English as a second language, or even those who do not come from other countries but whose English or French is a second language. I'm talking here about our Aboriginal children, who often speak Cree or Ojibwa at home and who have a very real difficulty in school when they first go to schools where they are required to speak in English. That is the obligation this government and indeed all governments have. We have to make sure there is money for these three areas in order to get rid of the problems, in order to give our children the best opportunity they can have.

If there is money left over—and if this government has money left over, I'm suggesting it is a worthwhile expenditure—then you have to look, as you are doing in this bill, to help foreign nationals who happen to be in Canada. I think we have an obligation to do that.

As I said, I worked for more than 20 years in the immigration department. I left there in 1994, on the day that I became the mayor of East York. I left to become the mayor. Up until that point I was counsel to the Minister of Immigration, appearing before the immigration appeal board and the immigration refugee board, and was considered—I don't want to be too immodest—one of Canada's leading experts on the Immigration Act. I still have my copies and I still read it daily, actually, in the performance of my duties as an MPP.

I will tell you that although the laws have changed from the time I left there in 1994, many of them remain extant and many of the policies and the way the government does business remain exactly the same. Of the things that have not changed in my time, the things that have actually got worse, number one is that there continues to be an enormous backlog in the immigration department. You read about it in the papers. Whether it is sponsorship of a relative, whether it is a refugee claim, whether it is humanitarian and compassionate grounds, whether it is a back-end review, in anything that happens within immigration or the normal assessment of an application, what used to take months now takes years. So we have to understand that we are going into a system that is tremendously backlogged and that no government, no recent government, has done anything to solve that problem.

There is an enormous decline in the number of personnel who work for the immigration department. The

number of officers available to process these applications or to assist people coming to this country or seeking to remain in this country has declined quite disastrously in the last number of years. Even though there may be some officers in some locations, the majority of immigrant applications are processed not in Toronto or in Ontario, where the immigrants who seek to stay here come to, but in fact are processed in Vegreville, Alberta. I challenge you to look at a map and try to find Vegreville, Alberta, because that is where the immigration actions are processed, in a town that probably has not seen an immigrant in some 100 years.

There is also the very political nature of immigration, which has not changed. We have all seen in the newspaper this past year the charges and countercharges against Immigration Minister Sgro. We have seen the machinations of the government and the immigration ministers as they come and go, and how they hand out permits or don't hand out permits, how they allow people to remain or do not allow them to remain. It's a very political office. Thrown into all of that, of course, is the very extensive court system.

1740

Having said that, and by way of background, in the next few minutes I'd like to go through what this bill does and some of the pitfalls the government may want to look at, because this is not benign in terms of 250 children. I hope someone is taking notes. I had hoped that the PA would remain. Perhaps she's watching on television.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour):** I'm taking notes, Michael.

**Mr. Prue:** If you're taking notes, thank you.

The whole import of this bill, which is only two pages, is found in section 3. It says, "A board shall not charge a fee," and then it lists the people to whom it cannot charge a fee. There is absolutely no problem whatsoever with (a), (b) or (c). Anybody who is under an educational exchange program, because there is a reciprocal agreement and the Canadian child is generally cared for abroad and is paid for abroad—that's reciprocal and it's good. There is no problem with the Visiting Forces Act (Canada). Canada has an obligation under NATO, and people will visit from time to time, as Canadians will also travel abroad. Recently, I met with some Estonian soldiers who were practising in Canada, at least one of whom had a child. There is no problem with the intent of that.

Clause (c)(i), a person who is "under a temporary resident permit issued under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada)"—there is no problem with that, because the temporary permit is issued in lieu of the actual permit being granted. So there is a process taking place, and we know that that person will be remaining in Canada.

Clause (c)(ii), a person who is "under a diplomatic, consular or official acceptance issued by the government of Canada"—again, we have an obligation to the diplomatic corps of countries coming to Canada to make sure that their children are not denied an education. In fact,

many countries, particularly Third World countries, cannot afford the fees of private schools and are very proud to send their children to Canadian schools, where they get a very good education.

The problem starts at clause (c)(iii), a person "claiming refugee protection under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada) or having had such protection conferred on him or her." I don't have any problem with the second part of that. They've actually had protection confirmed; they are in fact a refugee under the meaning of the Geneva Convention or the protocol signed in New York. I don't have any problem at all with that, because under the scheme of things, those persons will normally be landed in Canada in due course; we know they will be allowed to stay.

But this allows for any person who claims refugee status. I want the members to know who this involves. A great many refugees or refugee claimants come to Canada from countries that have abysmal human rights records and would ordinarily be expected to produce refugees. But I also think the members opposite need to know that this is a loophole for many people, when they are caught working illegally or doing things illegally in Canada, to claim refugee status in an attempt to stay.

In my time, it was not unusual to have refugee claims from Americans or British. I even had one from Sweden once, and some Swiss. I've had them from Portugal; I've had them from Spain. I've had them from countries that you would not think in your wildest imagination could possibly produce refugees.

This process does take a couple of years and I, for one, have to question whether it is within all of our hearts to allow not only a bogus refugee claim to be made that we know is blatantly false and has no chance of success, but also to spend taxpayers' money to encourage it. There are many, many such claims. In fact, even though Canada has the most generous and the most refugee-sensitive policy in the world, more than half of all the claims that are made in Canada at this time are denied. So you have to know that if there are 40,000 or 50,000 claims made a year, at least 20,000 to 25,000 of those will not bear out in the end.

I go on to clause (d), which says, "a person if that person is awaiting determination of an application for permanent residence in Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act." This is generally referred to in immigration parlance as the back-end review. This is where people who have come to Canada and claimed refugee status, and been denied that status, have an opportunity to make a case on humanitarian or compassionate grounds to remain in the country. The process generally takes from one to two years because the backlogs are so enormous. It means that a person who is not a refugee, but is a person seeking to remain in this country, can do so for a period of time—as I said before, usually a year or two to make the refugee claim and then a year or two to make the back-end review. The number of back-end reviews that are accepted is much, much lower than actual refugee claims. In fact, the last time I



saw any statistics on this, it only runs in the 10% to 15% average. So you have a lot of people staying here for what I would suggest is a long period of time without status and for whom this government is going to, under this bill, pay for schooling. If this is running at \$8,000 to \$10,000 a year per child, as the government's own estimates state, there are quite literally thousands of such children who may become available under this plan or who may be brought to Canada or to Ontario to take advantage of this plan, and the costs will not be insignificant. I want the government to take a very careful look if that is what you are planning in this bill, because I am mindful that we have a finite amount of monies available for education.

I would ask the government to look as well at clause (e), subclause (i), a person who is "under a work permit or awaiting the determination of an application for a work permit under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act..." A work permit is generally given to those who have made an application to be a refugee. That is the two-year wait before the actual hearing itself, and it can be longer in some cases. So this is a person who has not even formally made a claim but is eligible or has made an application, even if he or she is ineligible, to get a work permit, and who will be allowed to send his or her children to school. This will quite literally be in the thousands of people in this province alone.

We also look at (ii): "as a permanent resident within the meaning of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act ... or is awaiting determination of an application for permanent residence..." I have no problem with the permanent resident. People use interchangeably the words "immigrant" and "permanent resident." They are different things. An immigrant is a person who is seeking landing, who does not have status but is seeking to remain in Canada. A permanent resident is someone who has been accorded the status and who has not had the status taken away by due process of law.

I don't have any problem with the first part. I think every permanent resident doesn't even need this bill, because every permanent resident and/or his or her child has the right to attend school. But the second part is a person who is seeking that status and who may never get the status. There are quite literally in this province alone tens of thousands of such people. Whether or not their children are attending school, I don't know, but it is simply not correct and it cannot possibly be correct that there are only 250 such children in Ontario, all told.

The last one and the most significant one, which may cause the government to think about this for just a little while: It is estimated in Canada, according to conservative figures—and I'm not talking big-C Conservative—that there may be in excess of 200,000 people who are called illegal immigrants; that is, people who are in this country without status of any kind. They have come to this country. They have chosen to work, to stay, to do whatever they are doing. They are not permanent residents. They are not refugee claimants. They are simply people who have arrived here and who have not left in

accordance with the laws set out in the Immigration Act. There are approximately 200,000 by most estimates. Many of them do not bring their children. Many of them are here and send money back. So I don't think for a moment I'm going to tell you that they all have children here. But if there are 200,000, it goes without saying that there have to be quite a number of those children. They may not be attending school, which is a bad thing. But then again, if this bill is passed, they will be allowed to go to school, and I would suggest that many might come forward that you are unaware of and might seek to avail themselves of the opportunity to go to school.

The last section says it's any class. That makes me think that it's going to include all of those undocumented people who are in this country, all of those people who are subject to deportation orders who have fled, who have taken on new identities, who have moved cities or have changed whatever they had to change in order to remain here. Having worked in immigration, I can tell you that this is quite a regular occurrence. This is a wonderful country. I do not blame people for one minute for wanting to stay here. I do not blame them for one minute. If I came from one of those Third World places, I would do everything in my power to stay here too. But the fact is that there are a lot of them, and the costs to this province, the costs to the education system, may not be as small as what you are estimating. Certainly this bill will open up to a great many people who are not going to school today. I welcome that opportunity. I think those children should have that opportunity.

I want to use my last few minutes to talk about the cost. If the cost is several million dollars, \$10 million, \$15 million or whatever it is, I want to state that the people I represent and most of the people who have talked to me about immigration over the years want to make sure that it does not come at a cost to their own children or to their own school system.

I have a school in my riding that has a wonderful music teacher that was the subject of debate here last week: Earl Beatty school. The music teacher is not going to be there next year. The parents are all very upset that the music teacher is not going to be there. They've had a 5% decline in their enrolment. Maybe if a couple of these kids showed up, it would help, but they've had a 5% decline in their enrolment and they're going to lose their music teacher. They are very upset about that. They are very upset that the school is crumbling. They're very upset that it needs a new roof. They're very upset that there are mice in the basement. They want everything good to happen.

I would suggest that if they were to see that the money that they think is owed to them and to their children was taken away and given to others, it may cause some difficulty. I don't think we as a government should be trying to cause difficulty to potential new Canadians. We should not be causing difficulty to immigrants. We should not be doing anything that causes xenophobia in this country. We are a nation of immigrants and we have a responsibility to make sure that they are welcomed. We

have an opportunity here with this bill to do the right thing, but it cannot be done at the expense of what is wrong with the schools today.

I know that things are perhaps a little better. I talk to the teachers and they tell me things are a little better than they were two years ago. I think that's true. I talk to some parents and they say they are noticing some of the improvements. Some of the janitors have been hired back. Once in a while they even say a secretary is there, or something has happened to the school and they can see that there are some kinds of improvements. I want to see those improvements take place. I do not want this government, however, to take the money and spend it on this bill to the detriment of what you are already doing. If there is a finite amount of money, and I would acknowledge that in government there is a finite amount of money, then continue to do what you're doing. If this

is important, and I would suggest it is, then in your hearts you're going to have to find the money, and I would suggest to you that \$2 million is not an accurate assessment of what you're going to need.

Look at this bill very carefully. Think about who is there. Once this bill is passed, those who have not taken advantage of it in the past are now going to look to this as a good opportunity, and an opportunity which they would want for themselves and their children, and in fact that we want for them and their children. Look at that. If it's a good bill, then find the money for it.

I look forward to the budget debate. I hope to see money for this in the budget.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being close to 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 in the afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1753.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brant	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Burlington	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Cambridge	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Davenport	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London West / London-Ouest	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	O'Toole, John (PC)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Durham	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Erie-Lincoln Essex	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Broten, Laurel C. (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Sandals, Liz (L)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Guelph-Wellington	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Scott, Laurie (PC)	Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
Halton			

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Sudbury	<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)</b> Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)</b> Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	North / Thunder Bay–Superior– Nord	
Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)</b> Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timiskaming–Cochrane	<b>Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford	Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	<b>Kennedy, Hon. / L'hon. Gerard (L)</b> Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)</b> Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto–Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	<b>Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L)</b> Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Windsor–St. Clair	<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)</b> Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	<b>Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L)</b> Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L)</b> Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	<b>Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L)</b> Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough–Rouge River	<b>Curling, Hon. / L'hon. Alvin (L)</b> Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)</b> Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)</b> Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉ PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John O'Toole  
Wayne Arthurs, Caroline Di Cocco, Andrea Horwath,  
Cameron Jackson, Kuldip Kular, Phil McNeely  
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely  
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle, Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,  
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell, John O'Toole,  
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson  
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon  
Marilyn Churley, Vic Dhillon, Brad Duguid,  
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Deborah Matthews, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Andrea Horwath  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Michael Gravelle,  
Andrea Horwath, Tim Hudak,  
David Oraziatti, Ernie Parsons,  
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,  
Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Justice Policy / Justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bob Delaney  
Michael A. Brown, Jim Brownell, Bob Delaney,  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Frank Klees, Peter Kormos,  
Shafiq Qadri, Mario G. Racco, Elizabeth Witmer  
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco  
Donna H. Cansfield, Bob Delaney,  
Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese, Ted McMeekin,  
Norm Miller, Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Kim Craiton,  
Kuldip Kular, Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Mario G. Racco  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Mario G. Racco, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 10 May 2005

<b>MEMBERS' STATEMENTS</b>	
Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund	
Mr. Miller .....	6941
<b>World Lupus Day</b>	
Mr. Levac .....	6941
<b>Romanian Independence Day</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6941
<b>Member for Toronto–Danforth</b>	
Mr. Prue .....	6942
<b>Hamilton Regional Heritage Fair</b>	
Ms. Mossop .....	6942
<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Runciman .....	6942
Mr. Wilkinson .....	6943
<b>Events in Huron-Bruce</b>	
Mrs. Mitchell .....	6942
<b>Family health networks</b>	
Mr. Leal .....	6943

<b>REPORTS BY COMMITTEES</b>	
<b>Standing committee on social policy</b>	
Mr. Racco .....	6943
Report adopted .....	6944

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Children's services</b>	
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6944
Mr. Jackson .....	6946
Ms. Horwath .....	6946
<b>Energy conservation</b>	
Mr. Phillips .....	6944
Mr. Yakubuski .....	6946
Mr. Hampton .....	6947
<b>May Is Museum Month</b>	
Mrs. Meilleur .....	6945
Mrs. Munro .....	6946
Mr. Bisson .....	6946

<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b>	
<b>Federal-provincial fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Tory .....	6947, 6948
Mr. McGuinty .....	6947, 6948, 6949, 6953
Mr. Hampton .....	6949
Mr. Patten .....	6952
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6952
Mrs. Chambers .....	6952
Mr. Hudak .....	6953
<b>Privatization of public services</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6950
Mr. McGuinty .....	6950

Mr. Flaherty .....	6951
Mr. Caplan .....	6951
<b>School transportation funding</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6951
Mr. Kennedy .....	6951
<b>Water quality</b>	
Ms. Martel .....	6953
Mrs. Dombrowsky .....	6953
<b>Collective bargaining</b>	
Mr. Oraziotti .....	6954
Mr. Phillips .....	6954
<b>Services for the disabled</b>	
Mr. Jackson .....	6954
Ms. Pupatello .....	6954
<b>Transit services</b>	
Mr. Hampton .....	6955
Mr. Takhar .....	6955
<b>Education for children of recent immigrants</b>	
Mrs. Cansfield .....	6955
Mr. Kennedy .....	6955
<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	6956
Mr. Kennedy .....	6956
<b>Discrimination</b>	
Ms. Martel .....	6956
Mr. McGuinty .....	6957

<b>PETITIONS</b>	
<b>Frederick Banting homestead</b>	
Mr. Wilson .....	6957
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr. Marchese .....	6957
<b>Disability benefits</b>	
Mr. Craitor .....	6957
<b>Community health centres</b>	
Ms. Scott .....	6957
<b>Ontario pharmacists</b>	
Ms. Smith .....	6958
<b>Halton Recycling plant</b>	
Mrs. Munro .....	6958
<b>GO Transit tunnel</b>	
Mr. Ruprecht .....	6958
<b>Anti-smoking legislation</b>	
Mr. Tascona .....	6958
<b>Credit Valley Hospital</b>	
Mr. Fonseca .....	6959
Mr. Delaney .....	6959
Mr. Leal .....	6960
<b>Regional centres for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr. Dunlop .....	6959
Ms. Scott .....	6960

<b>SECOND READINGS</b>	
<b>Education Amendment Act, 2005,</b>	
Bill 194, <i>Mr. Kennedy</i>	
Ms. Wynne .....	6961, 6965, 6973
Mr. Qaadri .....	6963
Mrs. Sandals .....	6963
Mr. Dunlop .....	6964, 6974
Mr. Prue .....	6964, 6973, 6975
Mr. Wilkinson .....	6965
Mr. Baird .....	6965
Mr. Klees .....	6966
Mr. O'Toole .....	6968, 6974
Mr. Levac .....	6974
Debate deemed adjourned .....	6978

<b>THIRD READINGS</b>	
<b>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Bill 118,</b>	
<i>Mrs. Bountrogianni</i>	
Agreed to .....	6961

<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker .....	6943, 6957
<b>Members' birthdays</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6944

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 10 mai 2005

<b>DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES</b>	
<b>Mai, Mois des musées</b>	
M <sup>me</sup> Meilleur .....	6945
M <sup>me</sup> Munro .....	6946
M. Bisson .....	6946

<b>DEUXIÈME LECTURE</b>	
<b>Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation, projet de loi 194,</b>	
<i>M. Kennedy</i>	
M <sup>me</sup> Wynne .....	6961
M. Qaadri .....	6963
Débat présumé ajourné .....	6978

<b>TROISIÈME LECTURE</b>	
<b>Loi de 2005 sur l'accessibilité pour les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario, projet de loi 118,</b>	
<i>M<sup>me</sup> Bountrogianni</i>	
Adoptée .....	6961





No. 144

N° 144

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

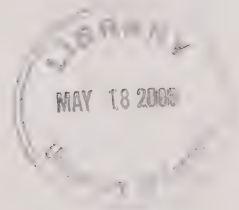
Première session, 38<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 11 May 2005**

**Mercredi 11 mai 2005**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Alvin Curling

**Président**  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

### **Copies of Hansard**

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

### **Exemplaires du Journal**

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.





## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 11 May 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 11 mai 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### SUMMERFOLK

**Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** This August 19, 20 and 21 marks the 30th anniversary of Summerfolk. Located in Owen Sound, situated on the shores of Georgian Bay, the Summerfolk festival is a music, arts and crafts festival, which for three decades has presented international and local musicians and artists.

Every year, more than 4,000 music fans come to Kelso Beach for three days to enjoy everything from Celtic to folk to blues music and participate in workshops, allowing them to get a more personal view of the performers. The natural stone and earth amphitheatre is the main stage, and the five side stages and the ever-popular Down by the Bay tent accommodate nearly 100 performers.

My wife, Sue, and I are members of the Georgian Bay Folk Society, which presents Summerfolk. The society is able to manage the event with the assistance of over 600 volunteers, who do everything from security to maintenance and cleanup of the site.

The current artistic director, Liz Harvey-Foulds, selected this year's performers from 1,800 applicants, and has put together a lineup this year that includes Valdy, Ian Tamblyn, Reggae Cowboys and Trout Fishing in America, to name a few.

Previous artistic directors include Tim Harrison, returning to perform this year, Ross Gibbons, Mitch Podolak, Neil Glenn and Don Bird. Summerfolk has grown over the past quarter century and attracts visitors from across North America.

With 40 artisans exhibiting their talents in the craft area, more than a dozen food booths, a sandy beach, a children's area, ample free parking, camping nearby as well as great local bed and breakfasts and good hotels, there is every reason to come to Owen Sound and celebrate 30 years of the Summerfolk experience.

#### KITCHENER YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL

**Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** If you are like me, you may sometimes grow a little overwhelmed by the many problems and challenges facing our society. I

refuse to be disheartened, however, because I know there is a generation following us that's full of energy, ideas and imagination.

On Thursday last week, I had the chance to help honour members of this generation by attending the eighth annual Kitchener Youth Action Council's awards ceremony at our city hall.

The Kitchener Youth Action Council, known as KYAC, is a group of volunteers between the ages of 14 and 24 who work within the city of Kitchener and act as the voice for the city's young people. They raise the awareness of issues affecting youth and help ensure that Kitchener is a fun, safe place for youth to live and that the contributions young people make to our community are properly recognized.

Last week's ceremony helped to celebrate many examples of excellent youth leadership. I'm pleased to take this opportunity to congratulate all who were nominated, and particularly those who won a KYAC Award. These include Alex Perssaud, Amani and Rajaa Yousef, Ashley Trakalo, Chad McCordic, Dennis Zvolensky, Fozia Jamal Abdi, Jordan Alexander, Josh Haddon, Terri-Lynn Langdon, William Makrigani, Celena Lilich, Josh Howitt, Ashley Graham and Tara Vanderzand. They were all truly deserving recipients and help to remind everyone that our future is indeed in good hands.

#### FAMILIES FOR A SECURE FUTURE

**Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** On Monday night I was pleased to be in the town of Erin to congratulate and thank the members of Families for a Secure Future and recognize the good work that they do in the province. It was great to be invited to a public event once again in Erin, a community I was privileged to represent in this Legislature for nine years, from 1990 to 1999, before redistribution. The Families for a Secure Future program is run by families for families, and they work to provide ongoing planning support to individuals with intellectual disabilities. We gathered to celebrate their success in obtaining a substantial Trillium Foundation grant.

To illustrate why they are such a worthy recipient of funding from the Trillium Foundation, one only has to see their vision statement, in which they say, "We are striving to support the choices of our family member with a developmental disability to achieve a meaningful life in the community." I want to offer my congratulations to Marv and Nancy McDougall of the Hillsburgh area for their work with this organization and leadership in their

community. The Families for a Secure Future program received \$289,500 over five years. That is certainly one of the largest investments from the Ontario Trillium Foundation that I have seen in our communities.

I'm thoroughly impressed with the work that they are doing for the betterment of people with disabilities. I want to recognize their emphasis on helping families overcome the isolation that they experience as they provide care for their adult children, and say how much I appreciate the fact that they have chosen to reach out in rural Ontario. I wish Families for a Secure Future the best in achieving their goals to help more individuals and families in the years to come.

#### KASHECHEWAN FIRST NATION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay):** Yet again I want to take this opportunity to say just how stupid the federal government is and how insensitive they are when it comes to dealing with First Nations communities. Last week, Monte Kwinter and I went up to Kashechewan First Nation to visit at first hand the damage that has been done there as a result of a flood. I give full credit to the minister and the government for trying to respond, from what we can do on the provincial side, to deal with the issues, and I would have to say that the province has been very responsive up to now. But the federal government yet again is showing just how ridiculous they are when it comes to dealing with our First Nations.

Now get a load of this: The community is on a boil-water advisory. The water plant doesn't work. This is how simple it is. The position that the federal government takes is that they are not going to supply the community with any potable water by airlifting bottled water into the community. So my federal member, Charlie Angus, and I intervened with the federal government, and they said, "OK, we'll provide potable water in bottles to children and people who are elderly who might be at risk." Well, what happens to the other 80% of the community? Are they supposed to not drink water or are they supposed to drink the bad water?

I just want to say yet again that I am getting increasingly fed up with the federal government's handling of First Nations' issues and think that at one point we as a province need to step in and start serving these people, who live in the province of Ontario, and provide them with the kind of infrastructure that we do in every other community in this province that we take for granted.

Shame on the federal government. They should wake up and do their jobs. If not, step aside and let us do it.

#### NORTH BAY LIONS CLUB

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** I rise today to congratulate the North Bay Lions Club on their 80th anniversary. As many of you know, the Lions Club is one of the largest service organizations in the world, with more than 46,000 clubs in 193 countries. Our club in North Bay began in 1925, when we were still very small,

and it has contributed to the growth and prosperity of our city immensely over the last 80 years.

The club and the Lions and Lionesses involved with it have served our community in a variety of important ways over the last 80 years.

#### 1340

The club purchased an X-ray machine and kidney dialysis machine for the North Bay General Hospital. As well, they contributed \$250,000 for ophthalmology equipment to keep eye specialists in our area. They also collected 2,000 pairs of eyeglasses and 422 pairs of lenses, which they distributed to the Third World. Their work with the hearing-impaired through the resource centre for the hearing-impaired in Sudbury has been remarkable. They have also made a major commitment to our upcoming North Bay regional health facility.

There are many dedicated, noble individuals involved in the North Bay Lions Club, many of whom were celebrated on Saturday night. I unfortunately cannot name them all, but I would like to note and congratulate Blake Chappelle, the president of the club; Norm Hillock, a 25-year volunteer who did a great job as emcee on Saturday; and, in particular, Doug Harrison, a 58-year member of the club, and Merve St Amand, who has served the club for 45 years. They, together with their colleagues, represent an incredible amount of time, energy and service to our community.

Thank you to all the Lions and Lionesses in the North Bay Lions Club for giving so generously of their time and energy. Their dedication is truly appreciated. I congratulate them on 80 years and wish them 80 more.

#### PRECIOUS MINDS RESOURCE AND LEARNING CENTRE

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to report to the House that last month I had the privilege of visiting Precious Minds Resource and Learning Centre, located in north Durham. It's on Highway 12 north of Greenbank and south of Sunderland, serving Brock and Uxbridge township.

I was there for the presentation of a \$138,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The grant, along with funds raised in the community, will develop programs, purchase materials, and operate the resource and learning centre over a three-year period. Precious Minds offers support groups for parents and professionals regarding learning disabilities and physical and developmental disabilities. It serves over 400 families, offering summer camps, parental and family resources, and support for children.

I would like to commend executive director Elizabeth Graham and her entire team of dedicated staff, as well as Sharon Simmonds, chair of the board, and the many equally dedicated parents and volunteers. Board members include Bonnie Noble, vice-chair, Laurie Noakes, Stephanie Weddel and Karen Rennie.

I'm confident that members of the House will join me in wishing the children, staff, parents and volunteers at



Precious Minds continued success in the future. This is the second such grant that Precious Minds has received. There is more good work in the future and I will support them all the way.

I would also like to recognize Doris Grinspun from the RNAO, who is in the gallery here today on Nurses' Week in Ontario.

#### HAMILTON MENNONITE CHURCH

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I rise in the House today to acknowledge the good work of the Hamilton Mennonite Church in west Hamilton. On April 15, they held a fundraiser and dinner in support of the Mennonite Central Committee, a highly respected NGO that fosters peace, justice and development in developing countries around the world.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's recent ban on portable meat canners across our country has deeply affected the MCC's plan to continue their philanthropy in lesser-developed countries. This ban will be in effect at the end of 2005, and in anticipation of this event, the MCC has planned to can meat for distribution as emergency food relief to global disaster areas around the world. The fundraiser in Hamilton on the 15th raised money to speed up the canning process in order to ensure that there will be enough food to go around when the ban comes into effect. I want to sincerely thank them for their warm hospitality and generosity afforded to myself and to my mother at the time and to commend them for their wonderful work.

I would also like to welcome the president of Mohawk College, Marylynn West-Moynes, who is sitting in the gallery right now and is doing a wonderful job at one of the most highly respected colleges in Hamilton.

#### GOLDEN AGE ACADEMY

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** I would like to take this opportunity to speak about a wonderful non-profit organization called Golden Age Academy, founded in 1997. This organization is dedicated to providing seniors an opportunity to use their artistic skills and experience to enhance Ontarians' quality of life. The academy promotes active involvement of the members during their retirement. The members express their artistic talents by participating in many exhibits during the year where they expose their work of painting and sculpture.

On Wednesday, May 4, I was pleased to attend the exhibit opening at the Columbus Centre in Toronto. I was impressed with the quality of art. What is most interesting is that most of the members had not taken painting or sculpting before their retirement. In fact, their background was quite different, but after so many years of working hard in our new country, Canada, to raise a family and pay the mortgage, they finally have some time to dedicate to something that stimulates them, and that is art. I believe that the Golden Age Academy can provide

leadership to seniors in Ontario so that our seniors' lives can continue to be exciting and challenging.

I wish to thank LIUNA 506 for providing a place, the Columbus Centre for hosting the exhibit, Marino Toppan for being the president, and Mirella Tersigni and Mr. Tersigni for providing art leadership to the Golden Age Academy.

#### FIBROMYALGIA AND CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I rise today to ask members of this House to recognize May 12 as National Awareness Day for Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and to remember this day as it marks Canada's first national campaign for these two life-altering illnesses.

More than one million Canadians battle fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome, including children, two facts I consider to be alarming. Sufferers report that they experience chronic and widespread pain, neurological changes and unending fatigue, symptoms that often lead to other conditions such as anxiety and depression. There is currently no known means to prevent fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome and no identified cause. While there is no cure, there are some encouraging signs of treatment.

It is apparent that two main issues have to be addressed: First, more research needs to be conducted into the health concerns, as only a handful of researchers are working toward solutions. Secondly, there is a need to educate Ontario medical practitioners and patients on how to recognize and treat fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

I would like to thank the people of FM-CFS Canada, which is located in my riding of Ottawa Centre, for putting forth a tireless effort in advocating increased research and education. I commend them on their extensive initiatives. Be assured that this statement is intended to be a symbol of my support for this first national campaign. I therefore encourage everyone in this House to put their compassion in action to offer hope to the more than one million Canadians struggling with pain on a daily basis.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm delighted to introduce to the members of the House special guests in the east gallery: the director of the newly established Rental Control Bureau from Shenzhen city in China and her husband, Dr. Lan Chi Jing. They are accompanied by our good friends from Toronto, Dr. Gan Xiao Juan and his lovely wife, Sylvia.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Member from Davenport, that was not a point of order.

The member from Mississauga South on the same type of point of order?

**Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South):** Absolutely, a very important one, Mr. Speaker. I'm here to comment on the quality of the chambers of commerce across Ontario and the great job they do, and to recognize that I have seven members from the Mississauga chamber of commerce with us in the audience today: Russ McCall, Pamela Lester, Colin Tyler, Chuck Stobie, Lowell Rubin, Sonia Mistry and Mary-Ann Malush. Welcome, and thank you for the great work the chamber does in working with our government and improving the economy and the way—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. I'm extremely tolerant today. That also was not a point of order.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 11, 2005, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT (SEVERANCE ALLOWANCE), 2005 LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE (ALLOCATION DE DÉPART)

Mr. Murdoch moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 196, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act with respect to severance allowances / Projet de loi 196, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en ce qui concerne les allocations de départ.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

1350

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** A question for the Premier: On September 11, 2003, you made a solemn pledge that you wouldn't raise taxes and wouldn't run deficits. You said your word was your bond and affixed your signature to that pledge, and we all

know what happened next. Your illegitimate health tax will double this year, hitting taxpayers twice as hard as last year. In effect, you've already raised taxes this year.

Premier, Ontarians are tired of your making empty promises. The question is, are you tired yet of breaking them?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs):** I can tell you that we are very much looking forward to very shortly introducing in this Legislature—not in an auto parts factory but right here in this Legislature—a very solid budget which will speak, as I've said over the recent days, to the greatest priorities of the people of Ontario. They want us to continue to improve their public schools, they want us to continue to work harder to improve the quality of the health care they receive, and they want us to do more to strengthen our economy, which is the foundation for our public services. Our budget will speak to all those things.

**Mr. Runciman:** Premier, for two weeks you've refused to answer questions about your plans for dealing with your deficit. Before the election, you said, and I'm quoting, that you will balance the budget, keep taxes down and manage prudently, all of which we now know to be a pipe dream. In last year's budget, you broke your promise of balancing the budget each year, instead saying you would have it balanced by 2007. Now senior Liberal sources quoted in today's media say you have abandoned that pledge as well. You are literally making it up as you go along. Premier, when you talk about managing prudently, why should Ontarians believe a single word you say?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** The member opposite, like his colleagues, is plagued by short-term memory loss and doesn't like to recall the fact that they saddled us and the people of Ontario with a hidden \$5.6-billion deficit. Notwithstanding that sleight of hand, we've had to take that into account as we move forward, and we are managing our finances and what we have inherited in a prudent and responsible manner. We've managed to make close to \$3 billion by way of new investments in our health care system, and over \$1 billion in investments in our education system. In our first year in office, we have secured three times as many full-time jobs as part of the growth in this economy than did our predecessors.

So we're proud. There is much work left to be done. We will continue that, and we'll take the next important step very shortly through this budget.

**Mr. Runciman:** Premier, for weeks you've refused to answer questions about another one of your so-called priority areas: health care. Last year alone, you gave hospitals half of what they needed to meet patient needs, but you held firm and said there would be no bailouts. Then there was a bailout, but that was followed by yet more cuts. It's like watching Mr. Dithers, Jr. You took \$170 million away from hospitals and gave them a \$100-million bailout, and you spent another \$100 million of our health tax money to fire almost a thousand nurses. Premier, why should Ontarians have any faith in today's budget when you're so seemingly prone to making all of it up as you go along?



**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** It's kind of an interesting theme, but it's just not grounded in reality or in fact. There are only two parties in this House that have ever cut funding for hospitals, and we're not one of them. We're proud to have invested an additional \$1.7 billion in hospitals since earning the privilege of serving Ontarians as their government. By the way, that is hundreds of millions of dollars more than was committed to by the previous government through their Magna budget.

We are proud of the responsible approach we're bringing to management of the people's finances. We're also particularly proud of the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, which will require that the state of the government's finances be made public prior to an election. I note in passing that the members opposite, the Conservative Party, would not endorse that particular piece of legislation, which tells me that, if given the chance, they would hide a deficit again.

### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday, during question period, you made the following statement in response to a question concerning your dealings with the school bus operators of Ontario: "We have an agenda with the bus operators of Ontario, but at our last meeting we asked them six or eight pointed questions, which we're still waiting for replies to."

I have an e-mail from the stakeholders who were present at that meeting, and they have a very different recollection of what was said. In fact, it was you who committed to write to them, the Ontario School Bus Association, with specific questions on industry data. After reminders from them, they have yet to hear from you. Minister, was this just a convenient lapse in memory, or did you intentionally mislead this House?

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** The member knows that he has used some unparliamentary language. Would the member withdraw that comment?

**Mr. Klees:** With respect, Speaker, if the—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm asking the member to either withdraw or not. It's not a speech.

**Mr. Klees:** Yes, certainly. Let me rephrase: Was this a convenient lapse of memory on your part, Minister, because your words in the House yesterday are in contradiction to what stakeholders are saying.

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I am never, unfortunately, surprised by the depth of class exhibited by the member opposite. I appreciate that he has some genuine concern about transportation services in this province, as do we. We did have a meeting with stakeholders, and I stand by my remarks from yesterday: We are interested. There are a number of contentions being made. A number of people had visits, I think, from some of the bus operators, and we are trying to understand the facts of the matter. There is a wide range of arrangements across the province, and we have interested ourselves in that.

In the wake of the last government ignoring the question for seven or eight years, we've tried to come up with a good, equitable funding formula. We increased funding last year. We will try to resolve what we think is the essential issue, which is safety and effective transportation for the students of this province.

**Mr. Klees:** If you don't want to admit to giving us incorrect information here, then stand in your place and tell us that the stakeholders are lying, because here's what they said: "I sent him a personal note on January 14 thanking him for meeting and reminding him of his intent to write with a list of his questions."

To quote again: "I wrote again on February 22 reminding him."

The e-mail references two other specific times when you were spoken to directly. Minister, who's telling the truth: you or the stakeholders?

1400

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** Again, I appreciate the honourable member opposite's interest but it frankly has almost nothing to do with the meeting that we had. The members of the school bus association that he's representing want something from the government, and we are prepared to enter into dialogue with them. But very specific requests were made for industry data. In fact, they were prepared to—for example, I would say to the member opposite, how would we know their profit and loss margin? How would we know some of their effective costs? How would we know some of the things they're claiming? Those are things they were going to provide, and we remain interested in that. Contact was made between some of my officials and some of those operators when we didn't get the information. Not too long from now, there will be things that are provided for to help the students of this province.

He is advocating for certain bus operators, I don't doubt with some good intent, if not with very much effect.

**Mr. Klees:** Minister, the first meeting you had took place on January 12. Subsequent reminders of your undertaking to them were sent to you in writing on January 14 and again on February 22, and there was direct conversation with you on February 23, during which you said that probably your staff forgot to get back. And then on March 11, your director of policy and stakeholder relations, Rob Esselment, was given copies of all outstanding correspondences.

I quote from the Ontario School Bus Association's e-mail dated today: "Still nothing from Mr. Kennedy to the OSBA." Minister, rather than discrediting yourself further by attempting to justify your lack of action on this file, will you agree today to meet with the Ontario School Bus Association to resolve this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** I know you're very familiar with the association. I know that some of the people that work for it used to work for you and your caucus, and I think that's good. What I would say is that both the member opposite and your former staff are giving them that advice. The way to solve problems in education, and I

would say in any area of government endeavour, is to provide the facts and constructively find solutions. That is exactly what we have invited the school bus operators, as well as the school boards and all interested parties, to do.

I appreciate who he is representing here today. They would be better served to represent themselves. We look forward to meeting with them as we have in the past. Ultimately, again, the important thing is resolving problems that affect the transportation and safety of students in the province. To that we are committed and we will deliver the results.

### AIR QUALITY

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** A question to the Premier, and Premier, if you don't answer my question today, I'm out of here.

Yesterday marked another smog day, the second in three weeks, and we've yet to hit the heat of summer. In 2004, Toronto suffered 13 smog days, up from 11 in 2003. In 2005, we have already had three smog alerts, including a rare winter alert in early February. Yet despite the increase in the number of smog days, your government eliminated the light duty vehicle inspection program and cut the number of smog patrol staff by 50%. It is clear your government is more concerned about cutting budgets than cutting smog. For the sake of Ontario's health, will you reverse the cuts to the smog patrol?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I'm going to take the first question because who knows how much longer we'll have the honourable member here to enjoy the grace of her presence. I've always appreciated her intervention and never underestimated her commitment to the environment in particular. I'm saying nice things like this because I assume that you are not coming back.

Let me just say, before I give the sups to the minister, that we have moved heaven and earth when it comes to our environmental agenda, and in particular when it comes to cleaning up our air. Just recently, we were very proud to shut down the Lakeview coal-fired generating plant and, so we are clear, that is the equivalent of taking 500,000 cars off Ontario roads. We are proud of that accomplishment. I know the minister will speak in some detail about the issue being raised by the member opposite.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, clearly if you had things under control, as the Premier said, we'd be seeing less, not more, smog days. As you are aware, the Provincial Auditor found in his 2004 report that for two of the main parts of smog, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, a poor rating is not automatically applied when their concentrations exceed the air quality standard established in the air quality index. Sulphur dioxide levels were allowed to exceed the standard by 38%, whereas nitrogen oxide levels were allowed to go over by 28% before a smog alert was triggered.

Stop trying to hide the actual number of smog days to which we're exposed. Will you guarantee today that

when sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide levels exceed the established standard in the air quality index, a smog alert will be issued?

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** To the minister, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** I presume the Minister of the Environment, that is.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment):** Our government is not trying to hide the number of smog days that there have been. It's a matter of public record. I would just like to share with the honourable member that in 2001, sadly, there were 20 smog days in the city of Toronto, in 2002 there were 18, in 2003 there were 12 and in 2004 there were 14. If you consider those numbers, you would agree that it would appear that there is a downward trend. But I think what is more important to keep in mind is the good work that our government, led by our Premier, has underway to reduce caps on nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide. We are increasing the number of sectors to whom these caps will apply. As the Premier has indicated, we are committed to replacing coal-fired generation. We are committed to cleaner gasoline. We are investing in transit to take more vehicles off the road. That is going to have a positive impact on air quality in the province of Ontario. So I'm very proud of the commitment and the record of this government.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, I don't think that's an acceptable answer to those of us with kids and grandkids with asthma.

Listen to this: The auditor also revealed that air quality standards for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide used in the ministry's air quality index are much lower than World Health Organization standards, as well as standards used in the United Kingdom and Australia. Given that Australia produces over three times as much electricity from coal as Ontario, there are other reasons why Ontario's air quality standard for sulphur dioxide is inferior to Australia's. All you talk about is shutting down coal plants, but you've only shut down one. What's going on here? What are you going to do about those other sources that are leading to bad air quality in this province?

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** Again, I think the honourable member should review her notes. She would know that this government is proud of our five-point air plan. We are placing caps on NO<sub>x</sub> and SO<sub>x</sub> in six additional sectors. We have added 29 contaminants that must now be measured in the province of Ontario in terms of air quality that were never measured before.

She belongs to a party that thinks it's all right to burn coal. Our government is committed to replacing coal. She cites the incidence of sulphur dioxide in our air. Well, coal contributes to that significantly, and yet she belongs to a party that supports the use of coal-fired generation for energy in this province. So you can't talk out of both sides of your mouth. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot preach about cleaner air and standards and yet promote those very things that contaminate our air to begin with. I'm proud of our record to replace coal-fired



generation, for cleaner gasoline, for investment in transit and for—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### DUFFINS-ROUGE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto—Danforth):** To the Premier—but what absolute nonsense, that I, of all people, support burning coal. Nobody's going to believe that ridiculous nonsense.

My question to the Premier is: Durham region's planning committee has voted to let stand the city of Pickering's decision to overturn the easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. As you know, easements are trusts, which constitute a sacred legal tradition. Allowing the easements in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve to be paved over is the wrong message to send to Ontarians presently considering putting easements on their lands for conservation purposes. Will you announce today that you're going to court to uphold the easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** To the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I would like to thank the member very much for her question because, as she knows, this government has done more about greenbelt protection than any government has over the last 150 years. We are very pleased that a million more acres were added to the greenbelt protected area of the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment.

1410

As the member well knows, and I believe the Chair of Management Board indicated this earlier in another question, he wrote the mayor on April 11, this year, stating that the provincial government continues to be committed to preserving these lands' agricultural use. Let me make it absolutely clear: The Duffins-Rouge ag preserve will remain in agricultural use. As a matter of fact, the Chair of Management Board went on in his letter to say quite definitively that it's our expectation that Pickering will, in the future, honour the commitment to maintain these lands as an agricultural area and continue to uphold the intent and spirit of the memorandum of understanding agreed to by Pickering, Durham—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, I asked you a very specific question. I'll go back to the Premier. Let me make it absolutely clear: In the absence of speedy court action by the government, we are beginning to wonder whether land developer Mr. DeGasperis and Mayor Dave Ryan of Pickering are getting special treatment. The public certainly recalls their attendance at the secret \$10,000-a-plate fundraising dinner with the Premier and finance minister.

The city of Pickering has already taken the money and run. Part of the \$4.2 million they received from

developers for lifting the easements is being used right now to reduce their property tax increase from 6.7% to 5.5%. That money rightfully belongs to the people of Ontario, not the city of Pickering. Now that the region of Durham says they won't defend the easements on the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, once again I ask you, are you going to court or not?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** As the member well knows, in addition to the fact that the ag preserve is currently within the greenbelt and will remain permanently in the greenbelt, there is a minister's zoning order on the property that also protects it. It is protected in a number of different ways. I can assure you this government will do whatever we can to make sure those easements stay on the lands, as they were intended to, as all the parties agreed to some three or four years ago.

**Ms. Churley:** Minister, I've got to tell you, you are the only person left in Ontario who believes your greenbelt is permanent. Your government's understanding of "permanent" is as confused as Pickering council's understanding of "in perpetuity." Developers recognize that, contrary to your claims, one does not have to wait for the 10-year review to amend the greenbelt, and you know that, Minister. You have the power to initiate amendments to the greenbelt plan now, at any time. Ontarians are legitimately concerned that the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve is going to be paved over. Quit stalling. Announce today that the province will go to court to uphold the easements and the public interest in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** Let me first of all say that I compliment the member and the minority of her party who saw the light and voted in favour of the Greenbelt Act. I know she is committed to the greenbelt. We're not sure about her leader or a lot of the other people. We certainly know the Tories aren't in favour of the greenbelt, because they want to pave over the ag preserve.

Let me just say this: The agricultural preserve has been preserved in a number of different ways. It has been preserved by way of the minister's zoning order, by way of the greenbelt legislation, and I can assure you that the easements are going to remain on that property, as far as this government is concerned. We want to make sure that the million acres of land that have been protected by the greenbelt area will remain in public ownership for generations to use in the years to come.

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean—Carleton):** My question is to my good friend the Premier. Premier, do you trust Paul Martin?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I trust the people of this province and I trust in our government's ability to work with the federal government, to work with this Prime Minister, and to work on behalf of the people of Ontario in securing a government at the federal level that will always,

always be there to ensure that they respect the fairness that is owed to the people of Ontario. To be very direct to the member opposite, I trust the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Baird:** It took two full sentences to get an answer to what should be a very simple question.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Baird:** I say to the members opposite, I want to trust Paul Martin, but the reality is, he leads a corrupt and unethical government, so people in Ontario are naturally concerned about whether they can. Premier, I want to help you hold this Prime Minister accountable. I want to help you ensure that Paul Martin—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Order. There's a point of order on the floor, and I'd like some quiet while I hear it.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I've listened carefully to the question and now the supplementary, and it would appear that this question has nothing to do with provincial policy and therefore would not be in order according to the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. This is nothing more than a blatant attempt to campaign for the federal House. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you look at the question and rule as to whether or not a question that has nothing to do with anything related to a provincial ministry is a legitimate question. My understanding of standing order 36 is that this is not in order.

**The Speaker:** I listened to the member from Nepean—Carleton, and I think that his supplementary does relate to his first question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The clock continues to run if we continue to make this disruption.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto—Danforth):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm going to volunteer to try to broker a deal between the Liberals and the Conservatives here.

**The Speaker:** Let's proceed with question period, please.

**Mr. Baird:** I want to trust Paul Martin, the people of Ontario want to trust Paul Martin, but the fact remains, he leads a corrupt and unethical administration.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker: You've ruled on whether or not the supplementary was related to the first question. My original point of order had to do with whether or not the first question and the second question were in order, given that they didn't deal with a specific provincial policy—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. We seem to have many Speakers here today. I did rule on the question, and I ruled that the first question asked by the member from Nepean—Carleton and his supplementary are relevant.

I'll put the clock back two minutes.

**Mr. Baird:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that Paul Martin leads a corrupt and unethical government. People in Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** This has nothing to do with provincial policy. This is nuts, absolutely nuts.

1420

**The Speaker:** I'll ask the government House leader to come to order, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Could I ask the Minister of Health and Minister of Community and Social Services to come to order, and also the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The question has been asked.

**Mr. Baird:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I was continuously facing dilatory tactics and was not able to ask the question.

**The Speaker:** Please take your seat. The question has been asked, and I would ask the Premier to respond.

**Hon. Mr. McGuinty:** Well, a couple of responses: First of all, I think it is inappropriate to use this chamber to launch a federal campaign.

Secondly, the tenor and tone of the question are characteristic of an approach brought by the previous government. I think the people of Ontario are tired of the politics and they want progress. I think they are tired of the rhetoric and they want results. The approach we are bringing vis-à-vis the federal government, of any political stripe, was characterized by the progress we made, especially for new Canadians and unemployed workers, just this past week by working together with the federal government to get progress and results for Ontarians.

**The Speaker:** New question. The member for Timmins—Timmins—James Bay.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay):** I know we do get confused every now and then.

My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last summer you announced the closure of the Huronia and Rideau centres, the last two centres that care for individuals who are severely disabled and have multiple diagnoses. At the same time, some of the community agencies in our community that will have to care for the people going into the community are shutting down group homes. Pray tell me—but more importantly, pray tell the public—how we can justify shutting down both group homes and the Huronia and Rideau centres at the same time.

**Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** As this member is aware, for the last 15 years the government has been moving toward closing down institutions for people with developmental disabilities. It went right through the NDP government and right through the Conservative government, and now we are carrying that on. Over the last five years, we have moved 1,000 people out of institutions. In these next five years



we are moving 1,000. It is also the last 1,000. There are 38,000 others who have always been in the community, virtually—16,000 of those people living independently in the community—and we're proud of that. As a jurisdiction, we literally have the best community supports in the nation, and we're proud of that. Not only that, but beginning 18 months ago, we launched more investment in this sector than any other government has. Every government since the 1980s has continued to invest in developmental services: every single party, every single government.

**Mr. Bisson:** Minister, you can't be investing, because the very community organizations that run group homes in this province and provide community services can't provide the services to the existing community members now and are shutting down group homes. My question is, how can you justify not having enough money in the community sector, where organizations like the CTCRC in Timmins is shutting down a group home for eight residents this June in the city of Timmins, and at the same time we're going to be challenged in trying to deal with how we depopulate the last two provincial institutions? I go back to my question: How do you justify the closure of the last two provincial institutions and at the same time allow the closure of group homes in this province?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I appreciate the question so I can take a moment to suggest that the member opposite well knows what every one of us knows from being local MPPs; that is, families over the years have insisted that we change how we deliver services in the developmental services sector. Not only is it required by parents today that they want to keep their children at home; it has meant that we've had to change. Special services at home have grown every year, and we have more and more people who want special services at home and to not move people into the community. There are those whose aging parents do need to move into the community, and we have continued to increase the funding in this area.

I will suggest to the member that he and I are both well aware of the need for more resourcing in this area. Like every other government since the mid-1980s, we have continued to fund more and more in the developmental services sector, and I will commit to you today that we will continue to do the right thing for people with developmental disabilities in this province.

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr. Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** My question is to the Minister of Health. As you know, this past February it was announced that on Friday, May 13—this coming Friday in fact—five of the six Geraldton doctors will be withdrawing their services. Obviously, this is a huge blow to the community. Geraldton's doctors currently operate the Geraldton District Hospital and the Geraldton Medical Clinic. To make matters more difficult, Minister, as you know, northern ridings such as mine face many challenges recruiting and retaining physicians.

Let me get directly to the first question: Can you indicate to me and the people of my riding exactly what steps your ministry has taken to address this big challenge?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I would like to particularly acknowledge the member from Thunder Bay-Superior North for his work in support of the local community. I think it's fair to say that many Ontario communities look in on the challenges faced by Geraldton and they do so with a great degree of concern on behalf of that community, and we share it.

We sent out what I would call a system-wide rallying cry, and what I've seen is a tremendous willingness and degree of response from a variety of different parts of the health care system with a view toward helping to address the challenges in Geraldton in the short term as we work toward longer-term solutions. Those are not limited to, but certainly include, the leadership and work of the mayor and those physicians who are remaining; the health care providers in other places like the Group Health Centre in Sault Ste. Marie, who have stepped up and are willing to play a role in being helpful; a Greenstone health professional recruitment and retention team made up of community members, to work on these issues on a longer-term basis; and the University of Toronto and St. Michael's Hospital, which are willing to play a role.

Through the efforts we've made to reach out to physicians across the province and ask for assistance, there has been a new Web site launched to try to assist with the coordination of locums. Again, this is part of the short-term response, but it will be important in helping to stabilize the situation as we build a longer-term resolution in a really challenging circumstance.

**Mr. Gravelle:** It's reassuring to hear that there has been such a wide effort and great response to attract new doctors to Geraldton. Clearly there's still work to be done, and we're all hoping that Geraldton will regain a full complement of permanent physicians as soon as possible.

Minister, if I may ask you one more question, given the progress made over the past few months, can we reassure all the patients served by the hospital that the Geraldton District Hospital will remain open after May 13?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The short answer is yes. I want to acknowledge the work of the CEO of Geraldton District Hospital, and others, in reaching out to physicians who have previously done locum work as a priority in asking them to come back and serve. I've been heartened to see other commitments being made on the part of physicians who are willing to go and do locum coverage there. We will keep services at the hospital going as part of the short-term resolution.

I would like to use this opportunity to inform the honourable member that in June, I've committed to coming to Geraldton with a view to working with the local community and making sure we are doing all we can do in a circumstance that I think is well recognized to

have been created on the watch of previous governments, leading to serious physician shortages.

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** My question is to the Minister of Education. This question is directly related to an offensive and disrespectful statement the minister made yesterday regarding Ontario's independent schools. The minister is responsible for overseeing and supporting all levels and branches of elementary and secondary education, including the 869 independent schools in this province. Will the minister today retract his statement characterizing the former government's support of private schools as a bad habit? Will he express his regret and apologize to the more than 120,000 students, their parents and the educators of those institutions today? Will the minister do that?

1430

**Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education):** I have to say that, as a minister, I'm very flattered by the detailed attention the opposition critic pays to what he alleges are things I have said. I would like to say that we do appreciate that we have many fine schools that are not part of the publicly funded system. However, everyone should know that there is no government regulation, thanks to the members opposite. There has been nothing done to provide for that. The members opposite had a bad habit of doing things at the expense of our publicly funded system, taking away from the consensus that preceded them and that will survive them. They did that in favour of private schools that had no regulation. Even today, something we're now reviewing, you need as little as five students to create a private school. It's unfortunate that the member opposite was part of a government that threw all those schools in the same category with their proposition. The bad habit I asked them to leave behind is the same old thing we see today, which is this fear, division and conflict in education, and he perpetuates it. I wish he would let it go.

**Mr. Klees:** It's a very sad day in Ontario when the Minister of Education washes his hands of 869 schools in this province, 120,000 students, their parents and educators. Not only does he do that, but he treats them with disrespect. He says that I allege. I read from Hansard yesterday: "We invite the member to continue to support the idea of publicly funded education and leave the bad habits of the last government and the emphasis on private schools behind him where they belong: in the past."

Once again, I'm going to ask the Minister of Education to make the transition from a partisan politician to a minister of the crown and deal with his responsibilities as a minister with some dignity. Will the minister do that?

**Hon. Mr. Kennedy:** It's obvious the member opposite isn't asking me to match dignity—that's for sure—in terms of what he's looking for as a posture from here.

I will say this: It's not often that as minister you get the critic giving you an opportunity to elaborate on your

answer. I appreciate the chance, because the bad habits of the last government are hard to enumerate in one sentence. They include an unsupported policy of supporting private schools, without any consideration for the public purse whatsoever. They include letting our schools crumble, letting our students be in unsafe circumstances simply because you had priorities for tax cuts and other things. They include getting no results on behalf of the students in this province. Sitting in their plush seats opposite, those members abdicated their responsibility to make public education work. Yes, they had a lot of bad habits. What the people of the province need to know is that we're addressing every single one of them.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question to the Minister of Health. One year ago today you announced you were investing \$191 million in long-term-care homes to hire 2,000 staff, including 600 nurses. The reality is that five months later, when the money finally went to long-term-care homes, only \$116 million was actually allocated to the base budgets of those homes. This was confirmed recently by Karen Sullivan, executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, who said, "There was additional operating funding for staffing—\$96 million in 2004 and a further \$20 million on April 1, 2005, for approximately one quarter of the government's election commitment."

Minister, when will you actually keep the budget commitment you made last year, to invest \$191 million in the base budget of long-term-care homes?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** As I had the opportunity last week in the Legislature to continue to work on this issue, to correct the record of misinformation brought forward by the honourable member and her party, we made the point very well that in fact, over the course of the last fiscal year, we invested more than \$400 million in our long-term-care homes, the vast majority of that related to operating. This, of course, has contributed to significant new hiring in the long-term-care sector, has allowed us to restore some of the regulations that guarantee standards in our long-term-care homes, and accompanies a variety of other initiatives that, taken together, form the basis of a very significant reform package, lending itself to the use of the word "revolution," as we seek to continue to create more of a community environment in our long-term-care homes.

**Ms. Martel:** I'm sure that Karen Sullivan, executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, will be pleased to hear that you think she is misinformed. We'll make sure to get her a copy of that Hansard. Donna Rubin, as well, confirmed for me in a meeting less than two months ago that the allocation was only \$116 million. Those two, who essentially operate all of the organizations in the province that deliver long-term care, both say the same thing. Maybe it's somebody else who is misinformed, and maybe he's sitting on the government benches.



You also promised that you were going to hire 2,000 new staff, including 600 new nurses, and you've repeatedly said that those nurses have been hired. In the public accounts committee meeting last Thursday morning, your ministry staff had to admit that they have no idea how many nurses have been hired in long-term-care homes. They did a baseline survey of the nurses who were in place in October 2004, but they admitted that they will not know until at least June of this year how many new nurses have actually been hired. How can you claim that 600 new nurses have been hired in long-term-care homes when you have no proof of that at all and you won't until at least June?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** A very short answer to the honourable member: Read the ministerial statements that I've made in this Legislature over the course of the last week or two. She will see an acknowledgment that I have, in fact, not made claims that those are all hired, except that we are working to confirm that information through the course of accountability efforts that we're making with the long-term-care homes. The honourable member makes an allegation, as normal on her part, which bears no recognition even to what I've said. Go back over the last two or three weeks and just simply read.

#### *Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** It's not me who has ever been asked to use a polygraph to confirm the veracity of my statements. It is you who has that on your record. You may wish to continue to bring information forward based on misinformation. Simply read my ministerial statements.

### AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, in December you showed some leadership in bringing together the Premier's inaugural food summit. I had a chance to attend part of that, and I thought it was a very successful session. We had some good discussion about concerns and some discussion also about partnership possibilities. Minister, I'm convinced that farm organizations in the food sector can only work toward a sustainable future if we can keep open the lines of communication. Can you update us on the plans for the upcoming second annual Premier's summit?

**Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I want to say that I'm very proud to be part of a government, and proud to have a Premier like Premier McGuinty, that has a vision for the future. Because unlike the previous government, who slashed and burned budgets and, in particular, slashed and burned the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, by over \$100 million, this is a Premier who has a vision.

The Premier, in calling the Premier's agricultural summit, brought stakeholders together from all over the province, from the agricultural industry and the food

industry and, for the first time ever, had these people speak sitting in a room. The previous government didn't recognize the importance of doing that.

I want to thank the advisory group who have worked so hard, because what they are trying to do, and what the Premier's vision is, is plan for the future. Part of that planning for the future is engaging stakeholders in developing partnerships between producers, processors and governments. The work plan is in process and will be announced shortly, and I want to thank those individuals who spent countless hours on this.

**Mr. McMeekin:** Minister, as you know, my riding is largely agricultural, and it seems I can go nowhere in my riding without hearing some of the angst of members of the farm community around the high Canadian dollar, the impact of world commodity prices and other global factors.

I know that you want to look at some of the prevalent conditions that need to be corrected in order to make farming more viable, and I'm wondering if you could share with the House, in addition to the plans for the Premier's second ag summit, just what else I can go back and tell my constituents this government is planning to help ensure the prosperity and viability of our important agricultural sector.

1440

**Hon. Mr. Peters:** I'm really pleased to have a member like we have here, who is consciously and constantly engaging with the farmers. I will be meeting with representatives from his farming community next week, and I want to thank him for that.

Unlike the previous government, we want to help to enhance consumer awareness in this province. Where the previous government cut \$1 million from the Foodland Ontario program, we're not going to do that. We're looking ahead. We're looking at ways in which we can enhance consumer branding in this province. That's why I was pleased last week to see the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex bring forward a resolution as to how we can better brand Ontario products.

We're committed to adding value to commodities in this province. That's why we've moved forward with an ethanol strategy. The previous government sat on their hands and did nothing as far as trying to add value for farmers' commodities. The previous government sat on food safety; they ignored it. They ignored recommendations that went to their cabinet. We're committed to food safety, because all of this ultimately helps to enhance the safety and the quality of product, and makes sure that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** New question. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

### CANADA-ONTARIO MUNICIPAL RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** Today my question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. I want to begin by saying that we

appreciate very much the grants that we did receive with regard to the COMRIF program. I think that's important. But my question is not about the approvals; my question is about the turndowns, and a couple of significant ones with regard to sewage projects in the towns of Renfrew and Arnprior. I'm going to specifically talk about Arnprior today. Arnprior's application, very solid, is a project that has significant environmental concerns surrounding it. It's of significant environmental importance, Minister. And my question for you today is, given the emphasis that we place on clean water in this province, why would that application have been turned down?

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** My friend the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is dying to answer that question.

**Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** Let me first of all say that the member is quite correct. There were a number of projects approved in his riding. Let me just enumerate some of these:

For the county of Renfrew, we have a bridge that's worth \$885,000; a solid waste project in the township of Greater Madawaska for \$637,000; a road in the township of McNab/Braeside of \$223,000; and another solid waste project in the township of Whitewater Region.

The reality of the situation is this: There is over \$400 million of projects currently underway as a result of the COMRIF first intake projects. There's much work to be done, but I think we've made an extremely good start here.

**Interjection:** Don't forget the Pembroke courthouse.

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** And the Pembroke courthouse as well. We'll talk about that in the supplementary.

This is the first government to actually try to deal with the infrastructure deficit that that government—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yakabuski:** We're very pleased to have been successful in working with those municipalities toward getting approvals for those COMRIF grants.

But let's get back to the turndown in Arnprior, Minister. The members of council of the town of Arnprior met with myself and the Minister of the Environment at the AMO conference. In fact, later that morning, she cited them as an example of people who are working toward improving water quality and accepting their responsibilities. There's a nice supportive letter here for the application from the Minister of the Environment. Yet this municipality, their pollution control plant, the sewage plant, is under orders from the Ministry of the Environment. With that kind of significant environmental impact that could be felt by the community and those upriver, how do you justify turning down that application? Please answer the question. No more politics. We've got the list. Why did you turn it down? They were told their business plan was strong—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Gerretsen:** It is quite interesting, the attitude this member seems to be taking today, which certainly wasn't the attitude of the member from Simcoe North, who wrote me, as a matter of fact, a very nice letter and put me in his press release, about projects that were approved in his riding. We thank him for that.

All of the COMRIF projects were decided on a competitive basis. They were adjudicated taking into account safety and health matters and all the other aspects. They were judged on that basis, and the projects were, in effect, approved on that basis. I would strongly suggest to the people of the riding he's talking about, of the project he's talking about, that they apply for intake two, and who knows what will happen at that point in time. But it shows the tremendous infrastructure deficit that was left by the last government. If they had been doing their job for eight years, we would not be in the dire predicament we are in right now with respect to the infrastructure in this province.

#### CHILD CARE GARDE D'ENFANTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. You told the world that your child care deal is the same as or similar to the one signed by the NDP governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. But we know that is not the case. They committed that all new public dollars would be going to the creation of new non-profit child care spaces, when you on the other hand decided to open the floodgates for the for-profit corporations. Isn't that foolish. We all know, and the studies show, that non-profit is not only less expensive but also delivers better quality. You are going to let the for-profit companies have unfettered access to the \$271 million of federal investment and allow them, those private corporations, to fill their private pockets with public dollars. Minister, why are you opening the public purse to for-profit child care corporations?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I'm very proud to say that last Friday we signed an historic agreement with the federal government that will bring in over \$1.8 billion for child care over the next five years in Ontario. I know the honourable member knows that the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors have both contributed to the child care arena over the last few years and do very good jobs, because they are under the same regulations.

Having said that, I understand the concern of the big-box child care centres coming into Ontario and I can assure the member that that will not happen in this province. There are parts of the province where small private child care centres are the only centres in town. I can provide the list for the member. We cannot close them in order to fulfill an ideology of the NDP. They are the services that those children in those rural areas depend upon. They're under the same good regulations as



the other centres. But we will proceed. I thank her for her concern and assure her that we are looking after that.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–Baie James):** Madame la ministre, vous savez aussi que les ententes au Manitoba et au Saskatchewan sont très différentes envers la communauté francophone, telle que la communauté des Premières Nations, dans le fait que le financement est proportionnel à la population francophone ou autochtone. Allez-vous faire la même chose ici en Ontario, que les communautés francophones et autochtones vont avoir leur juste part du financement, basé sur la population totale de la communauté francophone ou autochtone de la province de l'Ontario?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** Merci. I'm working on it. I do want to reassure the honourable member that the minister responsible for francophone affairs has brought forward concerns about whether or not this agreement will in fact ensure that children of francophones in this province will be part of this plan and will be fairly part of this plan, and I assure you that that will take place.

#### CIVIL MARRIAGES

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** It's the month of May and it's springtime and it's the season for love and marriage. So I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. Many of us personally know of young couples in our communities who have been unable to have a civil marriage ceremony performed due to the long wait for a justice of the peace or judge. In fact this comes home to my own family, where Dennis, the cousin of my significant other, Andrea, and his now wife, Oma, both of Brampton, had to come to Mississauga in order to get married, and of course in Mississauga we are always welcoming people from Brampton or anyone else to come and get married.

But our justices of the peace or judges are often too busy handling court matters to meet the large demand to perform civil ceremonies. This is typical of the concerns that I hear from my constituents about the need for greater access to civil marriages. Minister, could you please tell me how the government of Ontario has begun to address this problem and to make access to civil marriages easier for Ontarians?

1450

**Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I thank the member from Mississauga West. I have to admit I don't have an awful lot of practical experience in the subject of marriage, but I will attempt to answer his question because it is something that is important for the people of Ontario.

I do want to thank the member across the way from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who certainly brought this issue to bear with respect to his idea vis-à-vis marriage commissioners. The McGuinty government opted for a different route. We thought that by designating city clerks in municipal courts across Ontario it would be a much more cost-effective and efficient manner in allowing those individuals who already have the experience

and the legal training and background to marry individuals in Ontario.

One of the great things about giving these municipalities this authority is that it actually generates revenue for these towns and cities, something that I believe is important so we end the downloading that was—

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Delaney:** Thank you very much, Minister. I know that many municipalities across Ontario have welcomed our new proposals and our regulations. For example, let me quote Roger Anderson, president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. He said, and I use his words, "Municipalities see this as a positive step in providing another level of service for people in our communities." Jack Watson, president of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, noted—again, I use his words—"Municipal clerks welcome this opportunity to expand their role in the marriage process and provide a more complete service to those seeking a civil marriage."

Minister, how can an engaged couple find out whether their municipality has extended the ability to solemnize marriages to city clerks?

**Hon. Mr. Watson:** Again, my thanks to the member from Mississauga West for his question. It is an important issue. Individuals who are interested in determining whether their particular municipality does offer this service simply have to call their city hall or their town hall.

To date, just to give you some statistics, 173 participants representing 126 municipalities have signed up for training. I'm very proud to indicate that 45 municipalities to date have passed resolutions—and that really is all that is required—including my hometown of Ottawa. In fact, just last week the very first couple came forward. I want to congratulate Runrong Peng and Beili Zhou, who were the first couple to be married under this new program brought in by our government. They join a great—

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

#### LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** My question is for the Minister of Health. My question is in regard to the proposed appointees to the LHINs and the role they will play. Will the board chairs have the exclusive authority to (1) create an organizational structure for their LHIN, (2) develop the human resource policies, hire and fire staff within their LHIN, (3) set the staff salary ranges within their LHIN, and (4) approve individual staff salaries?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm very pleased to take the question from the honourable member and also offer her, if she's going to be performing more work again on the health file, the opportunity for a briefing on this issue, because it's a significant one and obviously would benefit from her expertise as a former Minister of Health.

It's our view, as local health integration networks come forward, that it's important, as we are trying to create more of a systematic performance capacity in health care in Ontario, that we build upon the idea that all parts of the province emerge more equally. Accordingly, we think it's appropriate that we have local health integration networks with structures that are very similar.

The honourable member will see, as we move forward, a strong degree of similarity on all of the points that she raised amongst the LHINs in Ontario.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** In the Speaker's gallery is Ms. Donna O'Neil. Accompanying her is Hugh O'Neil, the former member for Quinte from the 30th to the 35th Parliaments.

**Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The O'Neils are joined today by 36 outstanding individuals from the city of Burlington who grace us with their presence in the east gallery. I want to welcome them today for their visit to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

#### PETITIONS

##### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

"Whereas 20% of the adult population or 1.8 million adults in Ontario continue to smoke; and

"Whereas hospitality concepts like bars, pubs, taverns, nightclubs, Legions, bingo halls, racetracks and casinos are businesses with a high percentage of patrons who smoke; and

"Whereas more than 700 businesses in Ontario have invested tens of thousands of dollars each to construct a designated smoking room to comply with municipal bylaws;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Permit properly ventilated and separate designated smoking rooms in hospitality establishments that regulate and control employee and customer exposure to second-hand smoke."

##### OPTOMETRISTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas the last funding agreement between the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario Association of Optometrists (the OAO) expired March 31, 2000; and

"Whereas the optometric fees for OHIP-insured services remain unchanged since 1989; and

"Whereas the lack of any fee increase for 15 years has created a crisis situation for optometrists; and

"Whereas fees for OHIP services do not provide for fair or reasonable compensation for the professional services of optometrists, in that they no longer cover the costs of providing eye examinations; and

"Whereas it is in the best interests of patients and the government to have a new funding agreement for insured services that will ensure that the most vulnerable members of society are able to receive the eye care they need;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care resume negotiations immediately with the OAO and appoint a mediator to help with the negotiation process in order to ensure that optometrists can continue to provide quality eye care services to patients in Ontario."

I send it down by way of Jonathan.

##### GO TRANSIT TUNNEL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I do keep getting petitions against the dilapidated bridge near St. Clair Avenue West and Keele Street. The petition is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario, the minister of infrastructure services and the Minister of Transportation, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas GO Transit is presently planning a tunnel in an area just south of St. Clair Avenue West and west of Old Weston Road, making it easier for GO trains to pass a major rail crossing; and

"Whereas the TTC is presently planning a TTC right-of-way along all of St. Clair Avenue West, including the bottleneck caused by the dilapidated St. Clair Avenue and Old Weston Road bridge; and

"Whereas this bridge ... will be (1) too narrow for the planned TTC right-of-way, since it will leave only one lane for traffic; (2) it is not safe for pedestrians (it's about 50 metres long). It's dark and slopes on both the east and west sides, creating high banks for 300 metres; and (3) it creates a divide, a no man's land, between Old Weston Road and Keele Street. (This was acceptable when the area consisted entirely of slaughterhouses, but now the area has 900 new homes);

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that GO Transit extend the tunnel beyond St. Clair Avenue West so that trains will pass under St. Clair Avenue West, thus eliminating this eyesore of a bridge with its high banks and blank walls. Instead, it will create a dynamic, revitalized community enhanced by a beautiful, continuous cityscape with easy traffic flow."

Since I agree with this petition 100%, I am delighted to sign my name.

##### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have here a petition signed by a lot of farmers, including a lot of



members from the Minister of Agriculture and Food's riding. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of Ontario farmers have been forced to take their concerns directly to Queen's Park because of a lack of response from the Dalton McGuinty government to farm issues; and

"Whereas farming in Ontario is in crisis because of the impacts of BSE, unfair subsidies from other jurisdictions, rising costs for energy and a crushing regulatory burden on farmers; and

"Whereas current prices for farm products do not allow for sustainable agriculture in Canada, with a 10.7% decline in the number of Canadian farms reported between 1996 and 2001;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to consult with Ontario's farmers to develop a long-term strategy to ensure the viability of agriculture in our province that protects our rural way of life, and to work in the short term to alleviate the farm income crisis and listen to the concerns of farmers about the greenbelt."

I affix my signature to the petition, as I totally agree with it.

1500

#### PENSION PLANS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I have a petition here that was provided to me by Tony Martin, an excellent MP for the riding of Sault Ste. Marie. He gathered these signatures to come to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and the petition reads:

"Whereas it has been more than 15 years since the last significant reform of Ontario's pension laws;

"Whereas the New Democratic Party believes that all Ontarians who have worked hard all their lives should be able to live out their retirement years with dignity and security;

"Whereas the fact that 60% of Ontarians are not covered by a workplace-based pension plan of any kind is simply unacceptable;

"Whereas the fact that 83% of workers in the private sector who do have pensions have absolutely no inflation protection and will inevitably see their pension benefits seriously eroded over their retirement period; and

"Whereas Ontario's pension backup, the pension benefits guarantee fund, only guarantees benefits up to \$1,000 a month and excludes multi-employer plans; and

"Whereas pension plan members now have to wait two full years before they are able to take their employer's contributions to their plans with them if they leave;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately establish a special legislative committee to examine pension issues and recommend real reforms to protect pensions and ensure all Ontarians dignity and security upon retirement.

"To support a plan of meaningful pension reform as proposed by Howard Hampton and the NDP whereby:

"All plan members receiving benefits under a defined benefit pension plan in Ontario would receive some inflation protection;

"The pension benefits guarantee fund would be increased to \$2,500 a month and multi-employer plans would be covered as well;

"Members would have immediate ownership over all contributions to their plan; and

"Measures would be taken to increase the proportion of workers covered by workplace-based pension plans."

I agree with this and have affixed my signature.

#### ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, signed by Stephen and Deborah Kwinter of Timber Mill Court in Mississauga and some of their friends and neighbours, to ban smoking in public places in Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 16,000 Ontarians each year die of tobacco-related causes; and

"Whereas the inhalation of direct and second-hand tobacco smoke both lead to health hazards that can and do cause preventable death; and

"Whereas more than four out of every five Ontarians do not smoke, and this large majority desires that enclosed public places in Ontario be smoke-free at all times; and

"Whereas preventing the sale of tobacco products, especially to young people, and banning the use of tobacco products in public and gathering places of all types will lower the incidence of smoking among Ontarians and decrease preventable deaths;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Ontario Legislative Assembly enact Bill 164, and that the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care aggressively implement measures to restrict the sale and supply of tobacco to those under 25; that the display of tobacco products in retail settings be banned; that smoking be banned in enclosed public places or in workplaces, and banned on or near the grounds of public and private schools, hospitals and day nurseries; that designated smoking areas or rooms in public places be banned, and that penalties for violations of smoking laws be substantially increased."

I completely agree with this petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature, and I ask Nathan to carry it for me.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton):** This is a petition on taxpayer protection. People are still smarting from the 2004 budget, and we're going to hear the 2005 budget today.

"Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget raised taxes while reducing access to key health care services by eliminating OHIP coverage for basic medical treatment such as routine eye exams, chiropractic and physiotherapy services; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Please ensure that all of the McGuinty government's tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in the form of a referendum."

I've signed that.

#### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition here to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, from Julia Ballard of Eastridge road, and Joanne Carruthers of Bartholomew Crescent, both in my home neighbourhood of Meadowvale in Mississauga. It reads as follows:

"Whereas some 20,000 people each year choose to make their home in Mississauga, and a Halton-Peel District Health Council capacity study stated that the Credit Valley Hospital should be operating 435 beds by now, and 514 beds by 2016; and

"Whereas the Credit Valley Hospital bed count has remained constant at 365 beds since its opening in November 1985, even though some 4,800 babies are delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital in a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

"Whereas donors in Mississauga and the regional municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital have contributed more than \$41 million of a \$50-million fund-raising objective, the most ambitious of any community hospital in the country, to support the construction of an expanded facility able to meet the needs of our community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care undertake specific measures to ensure the allocation of capital funds for the construction of A and H block at Credit Valley Hospital to ensure the ongoing acute care needs of the patients and families served by the hospital are met in a timely and professional manner, to reduce wait times for patients in the hospital emergency department, and to better serve patients in the community in Halton and Peel regions by reducing severe overcrowding in the labour and delivery suite."

I completely agree with this. I support my local hospital. I affix my signature and ask Derek to carry it for me.

#### HALTON RECYCLING PLANT

**Mrs. Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas noxious odours from the Halton Recycling plant in Newmarket are adversely affecting the health and quality of life of residents and working people in Newmarket; and

"Whereas local families have lost the enjoyment of their properties for themselves and their children, face threats to their health and well-being, and risk a decline in the value of their homes; and

"Whereas for the 300 members of the nearby main RCMP detachment, as well as other workers in the area, the odours are making their working conditions intolerable;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, demand that the Minister of the Environment take immediate action to halt all noxious emissions and odours from the Halton Recycling plant, and take all steps necessary to force Halton Recycling to comply with environmental rules, including closing the plant if the odour problems continue."

As I am in agreement, I will affix my signature and give this to Madison.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I received this petition from the Doversquare Tenants Association and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the so-called Tenant Protection Act of the defeated Harris-Eves Tories has allowed landlords to increase rents well above the rate of inflation for new and old tenants alike;

"Whereas the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (OHRT) created by this act regularly awards major and permanent additional rent increases to landlords...;

"Whereas our landlord, Sterling Karamar Property Management, has applied to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to add a fourth high-rise unit to our compound in order to circumvent city of Toronto restrictions on density and the city's opposition to its project;

"Whereas this project would lead to overcrowding in our densely populated community, reduce our precious green space, further drive up rents and do nothing to solve the crisis in affordable rental housing" in our area;

"Whereas this project will drive away longer-term tenants partially shielded from the post-1998 Harris-Eves rent increases, thereby further reducing the number of relatively affordable units in the city core; and

"Whereas before October 2003 ... 'real protection for tenants at all times' was necessary;

"Whereas our own MPP ... called for a rent rollback...;

"We, the undersigned, residents of Doversquare Apartments in Toronto, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To institute a rent freeze until the exorbitant Tory guideline and above-guideline rent increases are wiped out by inflation;



"To abrogate the Harris-Eves 'Tenant Protection Act' and draw up new landlord-tenant legislation which shuts down the notoriously pro-landlord ORHT and reinstates real rent control...."

I'll sign this petition and ask you to take it to the Speaker.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to suspend proceedings until 4 p.m.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

This House is in recess until 4 o'clock. At 3:55, I will cause the bells to ring for five minutes, inviting all members to return for orders of the day.

*The House suspended proceedings from 1510 to 1600.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### 2005 ONTARIO BUDGET

#### BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2005

**Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Mr. Sorbara has moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

May I have the indulgence of the House so that the pages can deliver the budget to each member.

I am confident that all members have received copies of the budget.

The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, when our government was sworn into office just 19 months ago, we pledged to work as hard as the 12.5 million people we serve:

- to fix their schools;
- to improve their health care; and
- to strengthen the economy of this magnificent province.

One year ago, I presented a plan to turn that commitment into reality. Today, I am here to report to the people of Ontario that we have made real progress. Here are just a few examples:

- Class sizes in the early grades are smaller, there are more teachers, and test scores are higher;
- Family health teams are now starting up around the province;
- An historic 1.8-million-acre greenbelt now provides a buffer defining the rapidly growing greater Toronto area; and
- Our auto strategy is leveraging \$3.5 billion worth of new investment.

All of this, Mr. Speaker, while we have seen the economy create 146,000 new jobs since we took office.

All of this while cutting in half the deficit that was predicted for 2004-05.

Je suis fier de la bonne performance de la province durant notre première année à la barre du gouvernement.

I am proud of how well the province has done in our first full year. The results are clear. Our plan is sound. Our plan is working. Our plan is working because we are working with the people of Ontario to form new partnerships.

We have formed new partnerships with students, parents and teachers; with patients, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals; with farmers and with business people.

Today, I am here to introduce to the people of Ontario the next phase of our plan to strengthen our province by investing in our people. It's a plan to deliver better schools for better learning, better health care for healthier Ontarians, smart investment in infrastructure for a stronger economy, and strong, competent financial management. I am here to announce to the people of Ontario historic new investments in universities, colleges and training—the most significant in 40 years.

Je suis également fier d'annoncer aujourd'hui de nouveaux investissements historiques dans les universités, les collèges et les programmes de formation.

**1610**

Before I outline the details, I want to underline what lies at the heart of this budget—and that is fiscal discipline.

The deficit for last year was \$3 billion—some \$2.5 billion less than what we inherited from our predecessors.

We accomplished this because the economy performed better than expected. Our revenues—particularly corporate tax revenues—were higher. Our interest costs—through better debt management and interest rates—were lower. We did not have to use our reserve. And we imposed discipline on the management of our resources right across government.

We watched every penny. So the deficit is smaller. But it has not disappeared. Far from it. We are still working our way through a structural deficit that continues to threaten our ability to fund the public services that the people of this great province depend upon.

Our plan shows that—at the latest—we will have a balanced budget in 2008-09. It may be possible to get there in 2007-08, if we don't need our reserve. But we will only get there if we continue to make discipline our watchword and hold the line on spending in most ministries.

On that point, I want to thank my cabinet and caucus colleagues for their support and their discipline.

I also want to thank the many Ontarians who spoke to us, often with great conviction and passion, during our pre-budget hearings. We heard every request. Unfortunately, we cannot grant every request. We simply do not have the financial resources to do so.

To govern is to choose.

We have chosen to invest in Ontarians' priorities—health, education and prosperity—and to do so without introducing any new taxes or tax increases.

Nous avons choisi d'investir dans les priorités de la population de l'Ontario—soit la santé, l'éducation et la prospérité—et ce, sans augmenter les impôts ou les taxes.

We have chosen to invest in the future. And we believe we have chosen well.

From Mowat to Davis to McGuinty, our greatest Premiers have made public education their highest priority. Our future demands this approach.

In today's knowledge economy, education is the prerequisite for prosperity. The brains and know-how of a skilled workforce are the economic edge of the 21st century.

So, if we are to continue to compete with our neighbours to the south and take on the rapidly growing economies of Brazil and Russia, India and China, we simply must equip ourselves with the skills to compete.

That is why an investment in post-secondary education today is an investment in jobs for tomorrow. But education is more than an economic imperative. It is the measure of our commitment to opportunity—it's the foundation of an engaged citizenry and a strong democracy. Education stands at the centre of our plan.

I am therefore honoured to announce Reaching Higher: the McGuinty government plan for post-secondary education. It is an unprecedented investment in higher education.

We will invest an additional \$6.2 billion in our universities, our colleges, our training system, our apprenticeships and our students.

D'ici 2009-2010, nous consacrerons 6,2 milliards de dollars supplémentaires à nos universités, nos collèges, nos programmes de formation, nos programmes d'apprentissage et nos étudiantes et étudiants.

In return for this massive investment, we will demand more access, higher quality and better accountability.

By access, we mean more student assistance, more student places and more opportunities for new Canadians. By quality, we mean more resources, more faculty, more time for students with faculty and more innovative research. And by accountability, we mean agreements and follow-up that ensure that greater investment equals greater results.

One year ago, we asked former Premier Bob Rae to conduct a review of post-secondary education, and I want to publicly thank Mr. Rae and his advisory panel for the depth of their insight and the dispatch with which they delivered their report. They're with us in the gallery today. Informed by that report, we are now implementing our plan.

New investments are already underway. New funding began last year, with an additional \$200 million. And we'll be adding \$683 million this year. By 2009-10, our annual spending on post-secondary education will be \$1.6 billion higher than was originally planned for in the 2004 budget.

We believe, as Ontarians believe, that if you have the marks, you deserve the opportunity. So I'm pleased that Reaching Higher will double the funding available for student assistance—improving assistance for some

135,000 students starting this year. We believe as well that, once you get the opportunity, you deserve a quality education.

Our investment represents a 35% increase in operating funding for institutions.

Nous proposons aussi de faire des investissements ciblés pour améliorer l'éducation des autochtones et des francophones, et les perspectives des étudiantes et des étudiants de la première génération, des néo-Canadiennes et des néo-Canadiens ainsi que des personnes ayant un handicap.

1620

Mr. Speaker, the foundation for the success of students begins in the early years. That is why we are so enthusiastic about our Best Start program. Best Start will significantly increase child care spaces for children in junior and senior kindergarten and make child care fee subsidies available to far more families.

And let us give credit where credit is due: The federal government will help—starting with an additional \$272 million this year. With federal funding, our province's investment will double by 2007-08. It will make Best Start a reality.

Getting our children off to the best start is one thing. Providing them with the best schools is another.

Our plan is to make public education the best education.

We want our students to be able to read, write and do math at a high level of comprehension by age 12. We want more students to stay in school so that they're learning to age 18 and beyond. In just 19 months, we've come a long way:

- This year, close to 60% of grade 6 students met the provincial standard in reading and math—that's real progress from last year;

- Our grade 10 students' scores are up this year as well;

- One in three schools in Ontario now boasts smaller class sizes in the earlier years;

- We've trained 8,000 lead teachers in best practices and we're training 8,000 more; and

- We have brought peace and stability to our education system.

These changes are being felt all across Ontario. But don't take my word for it—ask Marie Braz. She's a grade 3 teacher at Indian Road Crescent Junior Public School in Toronto. She told us that having fewer students in her classroom this year—thanks to the additional teachers we funded—has made a huge difference to her, but most especially to her students.

We will provide a 15% increase in education funding over the four years of the plan, and that will support:

- programs to improve reading, writing and math;

- Good Places to Learn—that's our fund for repairing and renewing our schools;

- the next steps toward achieving a cap of 20 students per class in the earlier years; and

- programs to keep students learning, at least until age 18.



A good education doesn't always mean learning in a traditional classroom. It also means high-quality apprenticeship programs and workplace training. So this budget provides for \$17.5 million by 2007-08 in new funding to support greater access to labour-market services.

Last year, we introduced a significant new apprenticeship training tax credit for businesses. This year, we're doing more to integrate new Canadians into Ontario's workplaces. We have:

- bridge training programs which will help skilled people move more quickly into the labour market;

- pilot projects which will help increase access to college programs; and

- the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, which will create new links with employers across the greater Toronto area.

Let me now turn to health care.

Ontarians' greatest asset is their health. And our government's plan is to do more to help people stay healthy, to provide better care if they do become sick, and to do what is necessary to ensure that medicare is sustained for generations to come.

Our plan includes a \$32.9-billion investment in health care in the current year.

But spending alone is not the answer. That's why our plan includes more doctors and nurses, shorter wait times and a plan to keep Ontarians healthier.

Voilà pourquoi notre plan comprend l'accroissement du nombre de médecins et d'infirmières, la réduction des temps d'attente et la promotion de la santé des Ontariennes et des Ontariens.

Already, we have made progress, great progress:

- We have more than doubled the number of training spots for international medical graduates;

- In the fall, students will begin studying at a new medical school in northern Ontario;

- We will be increasing first-year medical school spaces by 15%;

- We have provided funding for more than 3,000 new nursing positions in hospitals, long-term-care homes, home care and community agencies; and

- We have approved some 52 new family health teams and three networks of health teams.

These steps are particularly important and will have a particularly strong impact in underserved areas.

Families are excited about these reforms. So are family physicians. One of them, Dr. Kathryn Lockington from Kingston, tells us—and I'm using her words here now—that this is going to help her provide the best possible care for her patients, by sharing that care with nurses, dietitians, mental health workers and other health care professionals.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Lockington, who joins us in the gallery today, and through her, Ontario's vast network of health care providers, who are embracing this very project.

Our plan to reduce wait times is working:

- We're updating equipment and we're adding hours of service;

- We're providing thousands more cancer, cataract, and hip and knee replacement surgeries;

- We're increasing the number of MRI exams by almost 14%; and

- We've provided some 81,000 CT scans, an increase of 8%.

We're making a difference.

We're also investing in keeping Ontarians healthier:

- We've provided three new vaccines free of charge for children. That's saving families up to \$600 per child.

- Our Smoke-Free Ontario Act is making its way through the Legislature.

- We're encouraging healthier practices in our schools by banning junk food and launching Pause to Play, a physical activity program. A couple of us took a Pause to Play catch on the front lawn yesterday. Would you consider that leading by example?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Absolutely.

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** OK, I have his permission to play on the front lawn.

- We're increasing the provincial government share of public health funding from 50% to 75% by January 2007.

We're working to help health care providers develop long-term plans. Starting this year, we will, for the first time, begin to provide multi-year, hospital-by-hospital funding across the province.

We are also introducing 14 local health integration networks—LHINs, as they're known—based on the simple principle that local people are best able to identify and determine local priorities.

We'll be providing tens of thousands more procedures and reporting regularly on our wait-time progress on the health ministry Web site. We'll be creating more family health teams to expand integrated primary care.

1630

In summary, medicare is a profound expression of who we are as Ontarians. That is why this government is so committed to continuous improvement of our health care for today's patients and to sustainability of health care for generations to come.

The strength of Ontario's economy is critical to our ability to finance not just health care and education but all of the public services provided by the province. Before I outline the important steps that we are taking to strengthen our economy, let me quickly survey our economic environment.

We're predicting that the economy will grow by 2% this year, 2.8% in 2006 and an average of 3.4% annually in 2007 and 2008. The average private sector forecast is somewhat more aggressive, but we prefer to be cautious.

However, even with our prudent assumptions, Ontario is expected to create some 65,000 new jobs in 2005 and 118,000 jobs in 2006.

With steady gains in employment, overall personal income is expected to increase 3.8% this year and an average of 4.9% through 2006-08.

There are a variety of uncertainties beyond our borders and beyond our control, including, of course, the rising price of oil, the potential weakening of the US economy, higher interest rates and the appreciation of the Canadian dollar. We will obviously continue to monitor these risks as we proceed to implement our plan.

Our plan to strengthen the economy is comprehensive:—the five-year, \$6.2-billion investment in Reaching Higher, which I described earlier;

—a five-year, \$30-billion investment in infrastructure;—a sustainable, reliable electricity sector;—a modern, competitive tax environment—this budget contains, as I said, no new taxes and no tax increases;—a modernized regulatory environment—we're pursuing a multi-year plan to update Ontario's commercial law framework and we're launching an agency to champion small business interests;

—targeted investments in key economic sectors;—expansion of Ontario's research and development capacity; and

—steps to unlock the economic potential of Ontario's regions and municipalities.

A healthy business climate depends on infrastructure that is modern, reliable, efficient and affordable. Our five-year, \$30-billion infrastructure investment plan will involve both long-overdue projects and urgent new initiatives:

—highway construction in northern and southern Ontario;

—improvements in schools, colleges and universities;

—dozens of expansions and improvements to our hospitals; and

—major investments in public transit.

To help municipalities get infrastructure projects off the ground and, indeed, on occasion, in the ground, we are making available low-cost, long-term loans through the Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority.

Already, 166 municipalities are proceeding with some 1,000 local infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges and water and waste water facilities.

With this budget, OSIFA's mandate will be broadened to provide loans for culture, tourism and recreation projects in municipalities. Later this year, OSIFA financing will be made available to Ontario universities.

We are also inviting Ontarians to join in these great projects.

Today I am announcing that Ontario residents will have the opportunity to invest in infrastructure projects by purchasing infrastructure renewal bonds. These bonds will go on sale later this year and will provide a solid investment for Ontarians across the province.

At the same time, this government is exploring ways to accelerate our infrastructure plan. We're looking at ways to encourage Ontario's pension plans to invest more in building Ontario's infrastructure rather than investing their money abroad.

And, may I remind members, a review of major government assets continues. However, our commitment remains the same: Any net proceeds generated from asset

sales would be directed as a first priority to infrastructure.

There are certain core principles that will guide both funding and procurement:

—The public interest must be paramount;

—Value for money must be demonstrable; and

—Processes must be fair, open and transparent.

Local communities are where our economy gathers force. Over the last 19 months, we have worked with municipalities and we've made real progress.

We are the first government in the history of Ontario to deliver gas tax dollars for public transit—\$193 million this year and \$1.5 billion over the next five years.

We introduced the Ontario municipal partnership fund, the province's largest transfer payment to municipalities—\$656 million this year.

And as you know, we are in the process of uploading a greater share of the cost of public health, which will support our goals of healthier Ontarians and more financially stable municipalities.

Municipalities have also told us that they need more affordable housing.

Just days ago, this government signed an important Canada-Ontario affordable housing agreement. It will help provide 15,000 new units of affordable housing including units for people with mental illnesses, victims of domestic violence and people in remote communities. It will help thousands of people acquire a safe, decent place to call home.

Monsieur le Président, l'économie du nord de l'Ontario a toujours présenté des défis et des possibilités uniques.

I was saying that the economy of northern Ontario has always presented unique challenges and opportunities. Our government is responding to those challenges and enhancing those opportunities.

This year, we're investing \$485 million in northern infrastructure—including \$297 million to renew and expand northern highways.

Our northern medical school is set to open and we're starting a new northern Ontario nursing education program.

We are providing \$20 million in new funding by 2007-08 to increase access to high-quality community college programs in northern and rural Ontario. We are supporting the mining sector by investing \$15 million over three years in geological mapping.

And we are working on ways to strengthen the forest products sector. It's a very important industry for Ontario—it employs almost 30,000 people in the north.

**1640**

I'm also pleased to report that our grow bonds pilot program—we announced that in last year's budget—has been very successful. Grow bonds will provide almost \$13 million in investment in new and expanding northern Ontario businesses.

Turning to agriculture, Mr. Speaker, I don't need to remind you that agriculture makes a significant contribution to the economy and the social well-being of every



Ontarian. The agri-food sector accounts for almost \$8.6 billion in exports. But it's also facing some very real challenges: low grain and oilseed prices, and the unfair interruption of our cattle and beef trade.

To build on our strengths and cope with these challenges, we have provided more than \$170 million in support for grain and oilseed farmers, and up to \$30 million to facilitate the recovery of our cattle industry.

We're moving forward with the new renewable fuel standard for ethanol. That's good news for the air that we breathe and for our farmers across the province.

And I just want to mention that in keeping with one of the themes of the recent Premier's agricultural summit—that is, the need for innovation in farming—I am pleased to tell you that we are establishing a new chair in agricultural research at the University of Guelph.

Research is at the core of intelligent societies. It nourishes excellence. It inspires advancement and productivity gains. It's the fuel of our economic engine.

So I am delighted today to announce that we are proposing the creation of the Research Council of Ontario. J'ai donc le grand plaisir aujourd'hui d'annoncer que nous proposons de créer le Conseil ontarien de la recherche. The Council's job will be to advise on research priorities, to help coordinate public research and to raise Ontario's profile as an international research centre. I believe the council will serve as a beacon focusing the world's attention on Ontario's abilities.

As a first step, we are consolidating several research expenditures into the new Ontario research fund.

We are also supporting research with investments in MARS, the medical and related science discovery district right here in Toronto, and in the McMaster innovation park in Hamilton. We are establishing—

#### *Interjections.*

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** I think I'm hearing from Hamilton.

We are establishing a new chair in productivity and competitiveness at the University of Toronto.

Again, our intention is to develop a global reputation for the depth and breadth of our research capacity.

Our entertainment and creative cluster already has a global reputation. This cluster brings together talent and technology and creates jobs. So investment in culture is an investment in both community building and economic growth.

That's why, in December, we announced an increase in tax credits for Ontario's film and television industry. That's a sector that generates \$2 billion each year for our economy and employs some 20,000 people. As a result of this announcement, more than a dozen film and television productions have started up and a dozen more are being scouted.

We've also committed \$25 million toward the construction of a permanent home for the renowned Toronto International Film Festival.

As well, this budget proposes enhancements to the tax credits available for computer animation, interactive digital media, book publishing and sound recording to

encourage these high-profile and high-potential industries.

Finally, on the economic front, this government is determined to get the best possible advice it can to shape the new Ontario economy. So it is with pleasure that I announce today the H. Ian Macdonald visiting economist fellowship within the Ministry of Finance. Professor Macdonald has made an enduring mark on public administration in Ontario as an economist, as a deputy minister and as president of York University, where he continues to teach today.

Our first visiting economist will be Tim O'Neill, the former executive vice-president and chief economist of the Bank of Montreal. We are looking forward to Mr. O'Neill's insights on strengthening Ontario's economy.

Our plan is working because of the discipline that we have brought to the management of our finances.

As I mentioned earlier, the deficit for last year is \$3 billion—some \$2.5 billion less than what we inherited from our predecessors. The deficit for 2005-06 will be \$2.8 billion and will steadily decline thereafter.

Given our progress, it would have been possible to project a balanced budget by 2007-08. Instead, we have chosen to invest in what Ontarians value: their education and their health care. We believe these are the right choices.

But even with our investments, we will eliminate the deficit by 2008-09 at the latest. And it may be possible to get there in 2007-08 if we do not need to use our reserve.

We will be investing in priority areas, but we will be holding the line on costs in most ministries. We will continue to be focused and continue to be disciplined.

And because of our Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, all of our numbers will be subject to the scrutiny of the Auditor General and the public before the next election.

Finally, I want to point out that our ability to invest in Ontario's future prosperity continues to be compromised by the difference between what the federal government collects from Ontarians and what it returns to the province.

The government of Ontario and third parties such as CIBC World Markets and others have identified a \$23-billion gap in that regard. We have begun engaging the federal government on this issue, and we have had some early success. But more needs to be done if we are to ensure a stronger Ontario in a stronger Canada.

If the gap is narrowed, we can accelerate, and even expand, our plan. But our plan can't wait—because the people of Ontario can't wait. We are delivering the very best for Ontarians within our financial constraints. We are improving services and at the same time we are reducing the deficit. Both can be done. Both have to be done.

**1650**

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, permit me, if you will, to thank some very important people.

Just a few days ago we celebrated the 60th anniversary of VE Day—and 2005, as you know, is the Year of the

Veteran. We wouldn't be here today, with the rich opportunities we're blessed with, were it not for the sacrifices of those men and women more than 60 years ago.

Among those men and women, if you'll permit me, I'd like to mention my late father-in-law, Ted Barlow. He survived the horrors of war in the Far East, returned to Canada to till the soil and raise a wonderful family. He taught us all about the power of courage in the face of unspeakable hardship. We stand here today because Ted Barlow and his fellow soldiers stood up for democracy then. So to the veterans in the gallery and their relatives—I include my mother-in-law, Oda Barlow—we say thank you.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** A tremendously dedicated team of public servants in the Ministry of Finance, led by Deputy Minister Colin Andersen, have worked diligently on the design of this budget. I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of them, and I would like to pay special tribute to one in particular.

For the past 32 years, Tom Sweeting, assistant deputy minister, budget and taxation, has helped to shape this province's budgetary policies. This is his 32nd budget. On behalf of the government, I would like to thank Tom for his outstanding commitment, his keen intelligence and his unfailing humour.

And through you, Tom, I would like to pay tribute to the tens of thousands of men and women in the Ontario public service who have dedicated their careers to serving the people of this province. You have been an example to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has so often said, our people are our greatest asset.

L'atout le plus précieux de l'Ontario est sa population.

Today we are implementing our plan to invest in their future: in better education from the early years to the most sophisticated graduate degree, in more timely and

more compassionate health care, and in a stronger, more productive economy.

In doing so, I believe that we unlock Ontario's great potential and ensure that this province is the place to be now and for decades to come.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville):** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon. Mr. Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I request that the House revert to introduction of bills.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2005

#### LOI DE 2005

#### SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Mr Sorbara moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 197, An Act to implement Budget measures /  
Projet de loi 197, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines  
mesures budgétaires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Alvin Curling):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

**Interjections:** Until 10 o'clock.

**The Speaker:** Please don't be late: 10 a.m. of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1658.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Alvin Curling

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton Mountain	<b>Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L)</b> Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Flamborough-Aldershot	<b>Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)</b> First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative		Marsales, Judy (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)</b> Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Beaches-East York /		Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Beaches-York-Est		Huron-Bruce	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Brampton Centre /	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Milloy, John (L)
Brampton-Centre		Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Brampton West-Mississauga /	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga		Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	London-Fanshawe	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Markham	<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Don Valley East /	<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)</b> Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Don Valley-Est	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Peterson, Tim (L)
Don Valley West /		Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Delaney, Bob (L)
Don Valley-Ouest		Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Baird, John R. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Nepean-Carleton	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Wellington-Grey	O'Toole, John (PC)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Craiton, Kim (L)
Durham	Colle, Mike (L)	Niagara Falls	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Eglinton-Lawrence	<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)</b> Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Nickel Belt	Smith, Monique M. (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Nipissing	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
Erie-Lincoln	<b>Crozier, Bruce (L)</b> Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Northumberland	Klees, Frank (PC)
Essex	Cansfield, Donna H. (L)	Oak Ridges	
Etobicoke Centre /	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)		
Etobicoke-Centre			
Etobicoke North /			
Etobicoke-Nord			
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Broten, Laurel C. (L)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)		
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 11 May 2005

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Summerfolk</b>	
Mr. Murdoch.....	6979
<b>Kitchener Youth Action Council</b>	
Mr. Milloy .....	6979
<b>Families for a Secure Future</b>	
Mr. Arnott.....	6979
<b>Kashechewan First Nation</b>	
Mr. Bisson .....	6980
<b>North Bay Lions Club</b>	
Ms. Smith.....	6980
<b>Precious Minds Resource and Learning Centre</b>	
Mr. O'Toole.....	6980
<b>Hamilton Mennonite Church</b>	
Ms. Marsales.....	6981
<b>Golden Age Academy</b>	
Mr. Racco .....	6981
<b>Fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome</b>	
Mr. Patten .....	6981

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on government agencies</b>	
The Speaker.....	6982
Report deemed adopted .....	6982

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Legislative Assembly Amendment Act (Severance Allowance), 2005,</b>	
Bill 196, <i>Mr. Murdoch</i>	
Agreed to .....	6982
<b>Budget Measures Act, 2005,</b>	
Bill 197, <i>Mr. Sorbara</i>	
Agreed to .....	7000

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Government fiscal policies</b>	
Mr. Runciman.....	6982
Mr. McGuinty .....	6982
<b>School transportation funding</b>	
Mr. Klees .....	6983
Mr. Kennedy .....	6983
<b>Air quality</b>	
Ms. Churley .....	6984
Mr. McGuinty .....	6984
Mrs. Dombrowsky .....	6984
<b>Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve</b>	
Ms. Churley .....	6985
Mr. Gerretsen.....	6985

## Federal-provincial fiscal policies

Mr. Baird.....	6985
Mr. McGuinty .....	6985
Mr. Duncan .....	6986
The Speaker.....	6986

## Regional centres for the developmentally disabled

Mr. Bisson.....	6986
Ms. Pupatello.....	6986

## Doctor shortage

Mr. Gravelle.....	6987
Mr. Smitherman .....	6987

## Independent schools

Mr. Klees .....	6988
Mr. Kennedy .....	6988

## Long-term care

Ms. Martel.....	6988
Mr. Smitherman .....	6988

## Agriculture industry

Mr. McMeekin .....	6989
Mr. Peters .....	6989

## Canada-Ontario municipal rural infrastructure fund

Mr. Yakabuski.....	6989
Mr. Gerretsen .....	6990

## Child care

Ms. Horwath.....	6990
Mrs. Bountrogianni .....	6990
Mr. Bisson .....	6991

## Civil marriages

Mr. Delaney.....	6991
Mr. Watson.....	6991

## Local health integration networks

Mrs. Witmer .....	6991
Mr. Smitherman .....	6991

## PETITIONS

### Anti-smoking legislation

Mr. Tascona.....	6992
Mr. Delaney.....	6993

### Optometrists

Ms. Horwath.....	6992
------------------	------

### GO Transit tunnel

Mr. Ruprecht .....	6992
--------------------	------

### Ontario farmers

Mr. Hardeman .....	6992
--------------------	------

### Pension plans

Ms. Horwath.....	6993
------------------	------

### Taxation

Mr. Sterling .....	6993
--------------------	------

### Credit Valley Hospital

Mr. Delaney.....	6994
------------------	------

### Halton Recycling plant

Mrs. Munro .....	6994
------------------	------

## Tenant protection

Mr. Ruprecht.....	6994
-------------------	------

## GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

### 2005 Ontario budget, government

notice of motion number 364,	
<i>Mr. Sorbara</i>	
Mr. Sorbara.....	6995
Debate adjourned.....	7000

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

Mr. Ruprecht.....	6981
Mr. Peterson.....	6982
The Speaker .....	6992
Mr. Jackson.....	6992

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 11 mai 2005

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative (allocation de départ),</b>	
projet de loi 196, <i>M. Murdoch</i>	
Adoptée.....	6982
<b>Loi de 2005 sur les mesures budgétaires, projet de loi 197,</b>	
<i>M. Sorbara</i>	
Adoptée.....	7000

## QUESTIONS ORALES

### Garde d'enfants

M <sup>me</sup> Horwath.....	6990
M <sup>me</sup> Bountrogianni.....	6990
M. Bisson.....	6991

## MOTIONS ÉMANANT DU GOUVERNEMENT

### Budget de l'Ontario de 2005,

avis de motion numéro 364 émanant du gouvernement,	
<i>M. Sorbara</i>	
M. Sorbara .....	6995
Débat ajourné.....	7000













